# History of Modoc County

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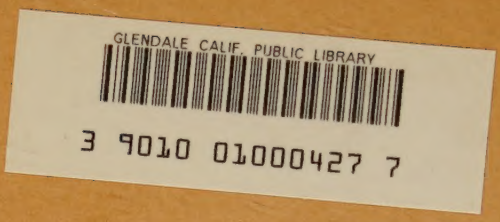
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# History of Modoc County

By Fred S. Cook, 1920-

A partial recording of interesting and historical events in Modoc County

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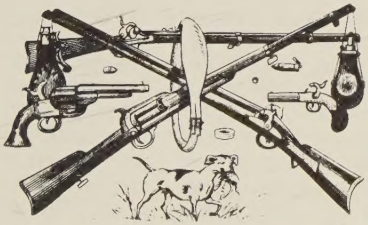


## CREDITS

*This book was compiled from early manuscripts*

*written but never published by the*

**WPA Writers Project of the 1930's**

*and with a helping hand from*

**Fred Cronemiller**

(former Modoc National Forest Supervisor)

**The Modoc County Library**

**The Modoc County Museum**

**The United States Forest Service**

*and the*

**United States Park Service**

**Heard's General Store - Litchfield**

**Chace's General Store - Adin**

## Chapter 1

# Early People

There is evidence to support the theory that the first inhabitants of Modoc County were a race of people, now extinct, who had a higher degree of civilization as compared to the average Indian tribe.

They were cave dwellers and left behind, on the walls of the caverns, the story of their existence and their passing. In deep caves, created by fantastic volcanic eruptions of tens of thousands of years ago, are still found paintings and tools which only lend to the enigma. For example in one cave they depicted a dinosaur, an animal thought to have lived centuries before the first man came to the North American continent. Lamps were found which closely resembled those used by the Mediterranean culture before the days of Christ. Metal tools, unknown to the tribes who lived here when the very first white man came, have been uncovered. Were they a part of the culture found in Mexico, of the lost tribes who once built cities in what is now Arizona and parts of southern California?

Perhaps no one will ever know.

The Modoc Indians have a legend which tells of a white tribe that lived in the subterranean regions, a tribe which came here while seeking a way to their home far away, but loved this land and stayed. They claim they were decended from this tribe, but no clue remains to know how the culture was lost; or if they were not so descended. What became of this early race? Perhaps someday, some archeologist, poking around in the caves, will find a Rosetta stone or some key to reading the history of these people.

Basically, Modoc County, as it is today, was inhabited by three tribes. To the north was the land of the Klamath; the northern Pauite lived on the eastern side of Warner range in Surprise Valley and around Fort Bidwell; the Modocs, the dominant tribe, around Lower Klamath Lake, Lost River and the Tule Lake, then on down to Clear Lake. Further to the west were the Shastas from whom the Modocs were to derive their name.

These tribes, as with most of the tribes of North America, were forever quarreling with one another and spent a great deal of the time whacking away at each others' craniums with stone axes. The Shastas called their neighbors to the east 'Moadoc' or 'Moahtochna', a phrase which generally meant 'strangers or enemies from a great distance.' When the white men first heard this phrase they thought it was the name of the tribe and, unable to pronounce it correctly, they shortened it to 'Modoc'. Actually the Modocs, and the Klamaths, called themselves 'Muklaks' which simply meant 'people'.

The Modocs were a strong, aggressive people who were hunters and fishermen. They fished from boats made of tules on the lakes. The hills and plains swarmed with deer and antelope. Because this bounty of nature attracted other tribes the Modocs, who prefered to keep to themselves in small bands, waged constant war to keep their lands free of the invaders.

Women, as well as men, went into battle and both sexes stripped their bodies and painted themselves from head to waist with startling colors and weird designs. And woe be the poor enemy if they painted their faces black for this signified that they were deeply disturbed and intended to battle to the death.

While other tribes held ceremonial dances devoted to such urbane matters as salmon fishing, pinenut gathering and so forth, the Modoc devoted theirs to scalping, death and themes connected with war. And, unlike other tribes, they never invited outsiders to attend. In fact they so resented an intruder that he was more than likely to wind up being the subject of the dance.

Another variance in their customs from their neighbors was that they never mentioned the name of a dead person. They did not retain the memories of heroic warriors or great chiefs of the past--and their history was never handed down in tales about the campfires as with other tribes.

Although the 'lost people', and perhaps they were the ancestors of the Modoc, lived in caves the Modocs built lodges or wickiups of timbers and grasses. These were built in a conical fashion, a foundation of two to four feet having first been prepared and then hewn wooden logs erected, leaving an opening at the top. Grass was woven into the structure and the whole thing plastered with mud to make it waterproof.

The Pit River Indians, a branch

of the Modocs, were an easier tribe to get along with. They shared their land with their neighbors and only fought as a last resort. However, when a fight was forced on them they donned bonnets made from the heads of animals and became very tough cookies to deal with.

The Modocs practiced cremation but the Pit Rivers and other tribes buried their departed friends and kin in caves or tree tops.

At some undetermined time, probably in the early part of the 19th century, the first French-Canadian trappers, working for the Hudson Bay Company, came into this land and brought some changes to the Modoc way of life.

At first trade was with the Klamaths and the Indians now became acquainted for the first time with horses. This is in a sense surprising for the plains and Rocky Mountain tribes, which included part of the Shoshone, or Paiute nation, had used ponies for centuries.

The Canadians offered various trade goods in return for pelts and slaves but possession of a horse soon became a mark of honor and esteem—not to mention wealth. The Klamaths raided the Pit River territory for captives but it was the Modocs who kept the market well supplied. They soon learned to appreciate the gifts of the white man, which included guns and rum. And as the Indian had to learn to shoot the guns so he had to learn to drink the rum. Despite claims to the contrary the indian was not a natural alcoholic who tasted one shot of booze and then went berserk. One old time trading post owner expressed his opinion of drunken Indians when he said, ' 'd rather have a hundred drunken Indians on the post than I would three drunken French-Canadians.'

In fact many of the tribesmen drank in moderation and many were strictly against it. If Indians did go berserk from drink it may well have been the liquor which was the culprit rather than the imbiber. Trade rum was little more than crudely flavored alcohol and might well have sent the president of the Temperance Union into a frenzied orgy.

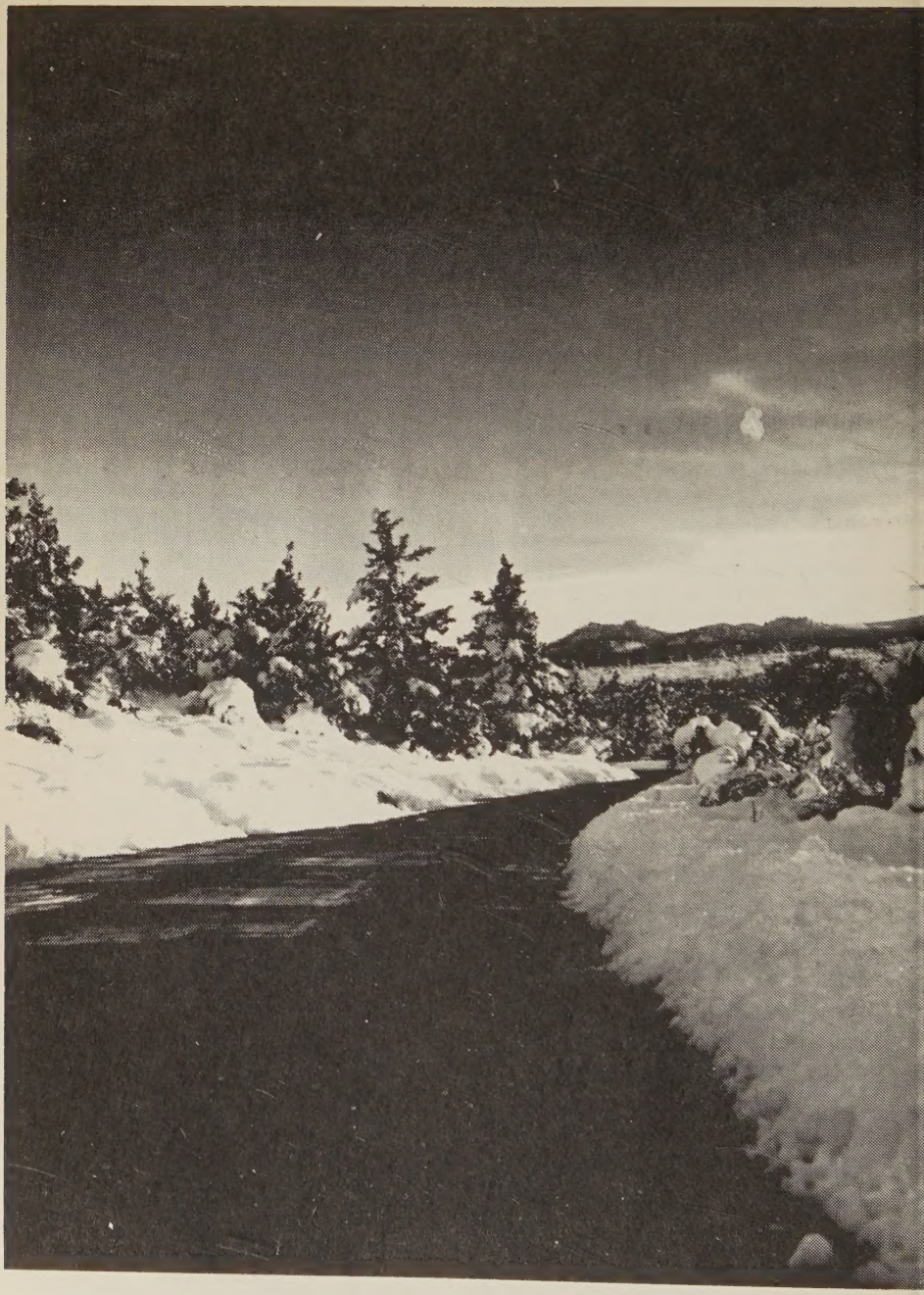
The Modoc was more than a warrior however. He, or perhaps it would be more appropos to say 'she', was a craftsman of the highest order. Not so long ago a group of canoe paddles was found near Tule Lake and, even decomposed, they showed marvelous worksmanship. A midrib was carved up the center of either side and both sides of the blades were ornately decorated.

They wore garments woven of feathers which were both waterproof and warm; they wove the tule reeds into baskets of sizes and shapes and for all types of use, and they made mats, some small, some large enough to carpet their floors. Even footwear was made from these tules. The tule was to the Modoc what the buffalo was to the plains Indian.

One of their unique inventions was an arrow for hunting water fowl. It was tipped with a fire-hardened point but had a ring of pitch about an inch back of the point. This caused it to skip along the water in a manner as to hit the sitting fowl.

Because of the volcanic nature of the country the Indians had an inexhaustible supply of obsidian for making arrowheads but their shafts were made of light cane and the bow had a lesser pull than those used by most tribes. Incidentally some of the lava flow which covered this land came as recently as 600 years ago according to scientists who made carbon tests of the Glass Mountain flow. There may well have been Modocs who were watching when Mount Shasta, and other Sierra peaks, spewed flame and molten rock into the skies.

How large was the tribe when it was at its peak? This is a question no one can answer. In 1864 Chief Sconchin replied, to the same question; 'Once my people were like the the sand along the shore. Now I call to them, and only the wind answers.



Medicine Lake Highlands as seen from Crescent Butte

## Chapter 2

# First White Men

No one knows for sure just who was the first white man to set foot in the precincts of what is now Modoc County. It must have been one of the trappers of the Hudson Bay Company, or perhaps John Jacob Astor's Fur Company—or maybe even a loner selling his furs where he could—who first drifted down this way.

At some time in 1828 a party headed by Alexander McLeod and guided by John Turner left Fort Vancouver on the Columbia River and ranged in a general southeasterly direction. There is evidence that they camped for a while on the McCloud River, whether they came over this way can be neither confirmed nor denied.

The following year, in 1829, Peter Kene Ogden followed a southern course east of the Sierras eventually to cross Walker Pass in Kern County. Ogden kept a diary and reported he trapped for several months along the Pit River and around Goose Lake. He might well have been the first 'resident' of the county.

After Ogden came a number of nameless trappers and where they went and where they camped no one shall ever know.

In 1830 Ewing Young passed through this land and returned with a herd of horses bound for Oregon. It is reported that a member of his party killed a Modoc so it may have been the Indians tried to steal some of the horses.

In 1832 an Irishman named John Work came down to Goose Lake where he camped and then pushed on along the Pit River to reach the Sacramento River. Even John Sutter once came through here on a visit to Fort Vancouver.

Joel P. Walker, brother of Joseph Walker, guided Commodore Wilkes through this land in 1840. Wilkes was on a surveying mission for the U.S. Governmen and such maps as he did make designated the Pit River as 'Pitt's River' and Goose Lake as 'Pitt's Lake.'

In 1844 a wagon train of about 800 persons arrived in Oregon. Some of these wagons turned southwest to enter California through Modoc County. Among these emigrants was John W. Marshall. The following year another train, or part of a train, headed by Stephen H. Meek followed the first train and brought William B. Ide to California. He was later to gain fleeting fame as the first president of the Republic of California.

In 1846 the so-called great pathfinder, John C. Fremont, came up this way on a 'mapping expedition'. He named what is now Big Valley, 'Round Valley' and Tule Lake he titled 'Lake Rhett'. He was north of Modoc county when word reached him the Bear Flag had been raised and it was reasonably safe for him to return to California. This he did post haste to attempt to make what political gain as was possible.

In 1845 Thomas McKay tried to open a wagon road into California

but failed in the attempt. Samuel Barlow tried the following year and was partially successful. That same year the Polk County Road Company was founded and financed by Oregon citizens, including Jesse and Lindsey Applegate. A small party, including the brothers, started out to map the road. They had a compass, a pocket telescope and a map of sorts, the latter being more of a hindrance than a help.

They came down from the north and camped at Hot Creek where Fremont had camped two months earlier. Here they were amazed to find pieces of old newspapers scattered about. It seems that amongst the titles he laid claim to Fremont could truthfully have been called the first 'camp litterbug'.

Near Tule Lake the party became lost in the lava beds and were separated. Levi Scott was the last one to find his way back to the main group and he reported encountering some Indians. They thought he was part of a large party and fled in their canoes.

One brave was met and with the aid of some gifts and sign language they were able to ask him where they could cross the river. He showed them the 'stone bridge' and left them there. The party then passed Clear Lake, continued eastward to Goose Lake and came into Surprise Valley. From there they continued on to Fort Hall in the east. There they found a number of wagons waiting and offered to bring them back to California. A group of 100 wagons agreed to follow them. David Goff and Levi Scott were designated as guides while the Applegates took some men and went ahead to clear the trail as best as possible. The train suffered some hardship before reaching Oregon but that is a story in itself.

In 1848 Peter Lassen went east and brought back a party of emigrants, following the Applegate trail through Nevada and coming into California in Surprise Valley. At the southern end of Goose Lake Lassen left this trail and crossed the 'Devil's Garden' to the Pit River, not far from Rattlesnake Creek. This was near the present site of Alturas. They went down the northern banks of the Pit to a place below Canby and then turned southwest into Big Valley in Lassen County.

This trail might have seen more traffic had not gold been discovered and the flood of adventurers and fortune hunters which hit the state then were interested only in the most direct route to the gold fields—and this wasn't by way of Modoc County.

In 1849 Captain W.H. Warner, U.S. Army, was ordered to survey the northern part of the state for a railroad line. He came up this way with a party of about 100 men, soldiers and civilians.

On September 18th of that year the party, somewhat diminished by sickness, camped at the headwaters of the Pit River near Goose Lake. They met some emigrants here who asked for food and directions. Some of these were hired by Warner to replace ailing men who had been sent back.

Warner found a pass he believed would be suitable for a rail line and while returning to the main camp his small party was attacked by Modoc, Warner was killed and his guide, Bercier, wounded. Bercier died the following day. In honor of his memory the Warner Mountains and Warner Pass were named.

The leadership of the party now fell to a Lt. Williamson who returned to the Sacramento Valley.

It was some years before another expedition came up this way. Lt. E.G. Beckwith surveyed Goose Lake in 1854. Williamson came back in 1855 and surveyed the Clear Lake and Lost River areas.

During the era of the, wagon trains it is estimated that over a third of a million people entered California through Modoc County.

## Chapter 3

# The Indian Wars

There were few, if any, tribes in the west who could equal the Modoc in ferocity and bravery—a dangerous combination made even more so by their higher intelligence. Never a friendly people so far as intruders into their land were concerned they became even more difficult when mistreated by the white man.

Their first scrape with the invaders came when Ewing Young came down through Modoc County in 1834 and for some reason or another slew two Indian boys. However, in the ensueing years the trappers and traders who passed through, or tarried for a while, were able to placate the tribesmen and there were no further incidents until May 1846 when John C. Fremont poked around the Tule Lake area. Fremont, never a very reputable character himself, had brought with him, under the guise of a military expedition, as fine a group of horsethieves and cutthroats as ever invested the west. They had a skirmish with the Modoc in which, from the reports, Fremont came off second best, losing several of his men.

Two months later more white men came, this time in the form of a wagon train. The Modocs thought they were big birds and while they might well have been amazed it did not deter them from swooping down and swiping some cattle. A short, quick battle resulted with one white man and one brave being killed.

Starting in 1847 Chief Sconchin ordered his warriors to attack all the wagons and one of his chiefs, Keintpoos, later known to history as Captain Jack, raided from Yreka into the Nevadas. One of his favorite points of attack was 'Bloody Point' near Tule Lake. Here the bluffs lining the lake narrowed and swung around to form a half circle which made a natural ambuscade for the Indians hiding in the rocks. The first wagon train to be hit here was in 1850 when a lone survivor rode into Jacksonville, Oregon, to report that ninety of his people had been wiped out. By the time the official Modoc War was declared it is estimated that at least 300 whites had been killed.

Captain John F. Miller, with a party of volunteers, rode to the site of the battle and found the Indians still looting the train. He attacked and killed several of the braves and pursued the rest into the tules where he captured a large number of women and children, some wearing the blood stained garments of their victims. These were later released but the word was sent to Captain Jack and Sconchin that the white man was now ready to fight and they could count on the loss of many warriors unless they made peace.

This didn't worry the Modocs much. They had had things their way too long to allow one small setback to stop them now. The year before a wagon train had wandered over the mountains and into the vicinity of

Goose Lake. The emigrants were 'tenderfoot' enough to think this was the shores of the Pacific and so they made camp and proceeded to throw a big party or 'Fandango'. At the height of the party some unexpected guests showed up--- a war party of Modoc who massacred everyone except for a single man who escaped.

The word 'massacre', as used in history and in the newspapers of those days, must often be taken with tongue in cheek. Often time a wagon would have an accident and be abandoned. Another train coming along would find it and discover that the wood of the abandoned wagon made a superior fuel to sagebrush. So they burned it. Then came another party of emigrants, totally lacking in knowledge of the west and they would find the burned remants of the wagon and believe this was the work of Indians. Or sometimes the billowing canvas of a wagon would catch fire, perhaps from a spark from the campfire or by a carelessly handled kerosene lantern inside the wagon. The combination of canvas and weather dried wood didn't last long when the flames hit it. Result another burned out wagon, or maybe two or three if the fire spread before it could be contained or neighboring wagons moved. Along came another train of innocents and 'Oh, my gosh the Indians have wiped out a train.'

The net result of all this was that if one totaled the number of 'massacres' they would reach an appalling sum and if this were true it is doubtful if anyone would ever have reached the west.

In Modoc country there were some true massacres. In August of 1852 a man reported his nine companions had been wiped out by an attack; in September a train of 65 men, women and children was hit at Tule Lake and all but three lost their lives. Of the three, two were young girls, ages 12, and 14, who were taken captive.

Charles McDermitt, sheriff of newly organized Siskiyou County, took a posse and headed for Goose Lake where the Indians were thought to be hiding. On the way they heard of another train of 36 persons wiped out.

In Yreka a man named Ben Wright, got a band of miners together and started out to fight Indians. Even the army now got into the act with Major Fitzgerald and a company of Dragoons taking the field.

All three bodies rode themselves ragged chasing Indians and never catching up with them. They did, however, keep the Indians occupied to the extent they didn't have as much time as they needed to harry more settlers. But when Wright got back to Yreka he discovered that another train had been wiped out at Bloody Point.

Wright saw it was obvious that he wasn't going to catch any Indians by chasing them through the tules and lava beds. So he sent a message to the Modocs inviting them to a feast and to discuss terms of trading for the two girls in their possession. It is said that it was Wright's plan to get the girls and then poison the Indians with strychinne placed in the food.

The Indians came but no girls. The Chief said they would be delivered in three days. The days went by and no sign of the girls but more and more Indians came into camp. At last Ben Wright, concealing two revolvers, went to the tent of the chief and demanded the girls. The chief laughed and said that he had no intention of giving them up but was merely killing time until he had enough warriors to wipe out the white men. He added he thought he had enough. Wright then drew his guns and shot the Chieftain dead and his followers turned on the surprised tribesmen and killed ninety of them before escaping. This reversal of tactics broke the power of the Modocs for a while. Wright later became an Indian agent in Oregon and was reported to have been murdered by a man named Enos, a member of

the Fremont gang.

In 1852 Fort Jones was established in Scott Valley. This helped matters. There were few attacks in 1853 apart from those on small parties of miners who wandered into Modoc territory. But word spread among the tribes of the valley that the Modocs were building up to a big war in which they would wipe out the white man forever. Many young warriors of other tribes slipped into the mountains to join the Modoc.

That year saw several small attacks and in 1855 a rancher, Granville McKeene, was killed near Applegate Pass when he tried to recover some stolen horses from the Indians.

The Indians seemed content to rustle cattle and horses during the years 1856 and '61 and while the cavalry dashed bravely here and there they were unable to catch up with any Indians.

In August of 1861 a trail herd was hit near Goose Lake, several of the 16 cowboys killed, and the entire herd of 910 cattle lost. Cavalry from Fort Bidwell and Fort Crook rode in pursuit and while they managed to lose some more men to snipers who stayed behind to fire from the rocks they never were able to regain the cattle.

When the Civil War broke out Chief Sconchin thought this would be a good time to drive the invaders from his domain for once and for all. He amassed a large number of braves from various tribes and tried a series of attacks. But rather than being reduced the garrisons at the forts had been increased and the Indians suffered several severe setbacks. His allies deserted him and in 1864 Sconchin signed a treaty with Colonel Huntington, the Indian Superintendent at Fort Klamath.

Under the terms of the treaty all the land bordering on Tule Lake and Lost River was to be ceded to the Government while the Modocs were to receive 780,000 acres on the Klamath Reservation and $320,000 in cash. However, Huntington's treaty had been superceded by a treaty signed in February 1864, with Elijah White, Superintendent of Indian Affairs for California. He had not taken the lands around Tule Lake and Lost River away from the Modoc and it was this treaty a part of the tribe preferred to accept. It didn't matter to them that White did not have the authority to make such a treaty nor that the U.S Government refused to ratify it.

To describe the Modoc it must be recognized that they were not one closely knit tribe, but a group of clans each with a sub-chief. The United States with a president and 50 states, each with a governor, could be a broad example.

To further complicate matters the Modoc and the Klamaths did not get along at all. The latter particularly hated the Modoc because they had long been defeated by them in battle. Now suddenly their old enemies were moved into their midst and for once the Klamath, having the greater number by far, found themselves holding the upper hand. Short of war, they made life miserable for their former neighbors.

The government either did not, or would not, understand this situation and so at last John Sconchin, son of the old chief, and Captain Jack walked off the reservation. With their families and a following of warriors they returned to their old hunting grounds in California.

Captain Jack, or Keintpoos, had gained his name because of his liking for brass buttons and military medals on his coats. He was an above average man in intelligence and had learned to speak English fluently.

Although walking off a reservation was considered a cardinal sin by most Indian agents, and especially by the cavalry, nothing was done about the rebels until one day, in 1867, two of Jack's braves were caught selling guns and ammunition to the Snake

Indians. This, and some other acts of petty theft, irritated the agent and he asked the military for aid in getting the wayward tribesmen back on the reservation. The army, which never got along too well with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, refused, saying nothing had been done when they first walked off and so to Hell with it now.

This encouraged Jack and Schonchin to steal more cattle, horses and anything else that was loose. On one occasion they even stole a team of horses while a farmer was plowing a field.

At last the outraged citizens requested aid from the soldiers and this time General Crook turned them down giving as his reason he had reports the Indian Agent wasn't giving the Modocs enough food.

Finally Crook sent a detachment of soldiers to the reservation to assist Superintendent Meacham and together they engaged Jack in a parley. He agreed to return to the reservation but made no promises as to how long he would stay.

Meacham, to avoid further criticism, gave the returning Indians food like they had never seen before. It was for this reason that Jack had returned. Winter was coming on and their nomadic ways had prevented them from storing supplies.

But his hatred for the Klamaths was in no way reduced when he discovered they had betrayed his gun-smuggling companions. The new agent, O.C. Knapp, had taken over the reservation and he foresaw trouble between the two tribes. He moved the Modocs to the Williamson River area to prevent this.

Captain Jack used this move as an excuse to again leave the reservation. He had come back with forty-three men, women and children—when he left the whole tribe, including old Chief Sconchin, a total of 371 people went with him. There were not enough soldiers on the reservation to hold them and then no one seemed unduly perturbed. The Indian agents and the military preferred to sit around and blame each other and one another for the desertion. Superintendent Steele, at Yreka, a friend of Captain Jack's tried to explain how Huntington's treaty nullified the one made with him but Jack prefered not to understand. He then warned him of the great might of the U.S. Army and Jack replied that being killed with a bullet didn't hurt much but starving to death was very painful.

Early in 1870 Jack said that if they would give his people sixty square miles of land at the head of Tule Lake they would remain there. Meacham approved this and forwarded it with his recommendation to the Secretary of Interior. Some settlers protested and as settlers could vote, and the Indians couldn't the Secretary turned the request down.

This disheartened old Chief Sconchin and he returned to the Oregon reservation with part of the tribe leaving Jack and 130 Modocs at Tule Lake. This group broke up into two factions with Captain Jack's group having John Sconchin and Scarfaced Charley, and the other side having Boston Charley and Curly Headed Doctor as leaders. Jack was willing to live in peace and wait for a settlement but the latter side was impatient and started stealing cattle.

In August of 1870 General Crook was relieved by General E.R.S. Canby, who, like his predecessor, thought the Indians were being treated unfairly. He told Captain Jackson at Fort Warner he was not to use force against the Indians until a talk had been arranged.

A little inter-tribal trouble arose now. Jack's sister died and he accused the medicine man of being responsible for her death. It was a Modoc custom that the medicine man got three chances—if three patients died so did he. Maybe the sister was

the third, anyway, Captain Jack dispatched the doctor to the happy hunting ground. A warrant was issued for Jack's arrest.

Meacham foresaw trouble here and he appealed to Washington to cancel the arrest order, asked Jack to return to the reservation, which he refused to do, and finally asked him to have a meeting to talk things over. This latter Jack agreed to. Meacham then told Canby that there would be no trouble and this message was forwarded through channels. In the meantime the settlers, who were losing livestock right and left to Boston Charley's group, kept harrassing government officials to do something about the Modocs.

In February of 1872 fifty soldiers were sent to Camp Yainax to keep order—even though the marauders were not there. A Major Otis asked for a meeting with Jack but the chief sent word that he was afraid to come with so many armed soldiers. The meeting was arranged the next day at another place and there the Modoc laid the blame on the Klamaths. This meeting gained nothing.

Then the order came from Washington, weary of protests from voters, to put all the Modocs on the reservation. A new superintendent, Odeneal, was sure he could persuade Jack to come peacefully but Jack told him he would fight. He also inferred that the Indians were through talking.

The soldiers were brought up from all neighboring forts and proceeded into the field. A detachment under the command of Captain Jackson met a band of Modoc near Crawley's Ranch and although they were under orders not to fire except in defense a battle broke out. Fifteen Modocs died. One soldier was killed and several were wounded. Captain Jack now declared war. The odds were astronomical—seventy-five Modoc warriors against 1000 regular and volunteer troops plus 72 Warm Spring Apache scouts. Even some of the Klamaths got into the act and joined the government forces.

The Indians scored first blood. They wiped out 20 settlers on the 29th and 30th of November. This made the settlers realize the dangers of the situation and some tried to get messages to Jack asking him to make peace. He refused, stating that Jackson had opened fire first, and without warning, and there could now be only total victory or defeat. The soldiers thought the whole thing was a lark. What chance did a handful of savages have against the whole army? They didn't know about the lava caves and they overlooked the fighting prowess of the Modocs.

The Modocs moved into the lava country, hiding their cattle in natural corrals where there was plenty of water and grass, and living in caves. Natural towers made lookouts where they could see the army coming long before it knew their whereabouts.

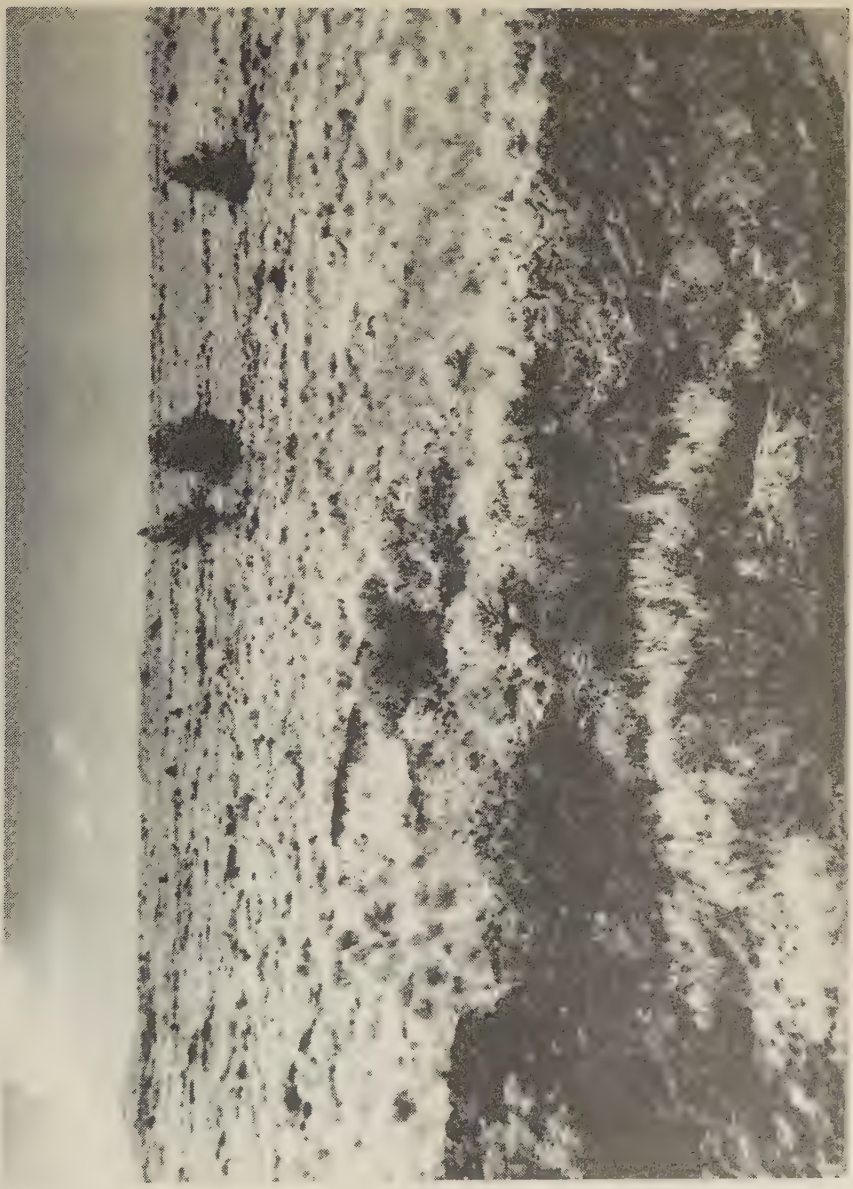
Troops arrived at Crawley's Ranch under the command of Colonel Mason. He sent for howitzers but Jack didn't wait. On the afternoon of December 22, sixty-five braves attacked an ammunition train and while the cavalry was able to save the ammunition they lost two men. The Indians escaped unscathed. Colonel Wheaton now arrived with the Oregon volunteers and once again the military decided to wait for the artillery.

Time stretched into January, 1873 and while there were clashes between the Modoc and army scouting parties most of the activity consisted of Jack's men raiding ranches and escaping back into the lava country. The settlers packed up and headed for the cities until things quieted down.

On the night of the 16th of January a heavy fog lay over the land and 375 soldiers under the command of Major Green, armed with the long awaited howitzers crept up on the Modoc camp. Green thought that a few howitzer blasts would settle things but the

**Captain Jack, the Modoc chief.**

--photo courtesy National Park Service



**This marks the place where Thomas attempted to reach the high ground**

—Photo courtesy National Park Service

Modocs had already slipped out through the tunnels and were soon blazing away at the soldiers from all directions.

Howitzers are valueless without a target and the Indians wouldn't sit still. As more and more soldiers went down under the hidden sniper fire a retreat was ordered. This became a rout and on the 18th the last of the army returned to camp bearing thirty wounded and leaving nine dead behind. The Modocs didn't suffer a scratch.

Colonel Wheaton wired Canby for more troops and Canby dispatched another 600. This time the soldiers were vengeful and ready to attack. Then Canby received orders from General W.T. Sherman in Washington not to use force against the Indians. It seems as though Indian agent Meacham had reached Washington and the ears of President Grant and had told him the Modoc were a peaceful people.

There now elapsed a period of no action on the part of the soldiers and Captain Jack took this as a sign of weakness. He conducted a series of raids on his own and suffered a loss of eight braves, all killed by the soldiers in self defense. This coupled with the loss of a number of horses discouraged Jack and he told his sister, Mary, who was living with the whites, he now desired peace.

Colonel Gillem agreed to talk but not having too much faith in Jack's word converged most of his troops at Van Bruner's Ranch where he had his headquarters.

A number of citizens got into the act and persuaded the Oregon Grand Jury to indict Captain Jack and eight of his band on a charge of murder. Governor Grover warned Washington about trying to whitewash the Modocs' crimes and in turn was told that if the state interfered they could expect no more federal help in settling their Indian problems.

So things stood on February 26 when Fairchild, along with Frank Riddle and his Indian wife Winema, paid an unofficial visit to Jack who insisted the meeting be held in the lava beds. Finally Fairchild persuaded him to meet on neutral ground. On March 5th a meeting was held with an Indian commission which consisting of Steele, Fairchild and a Mr. Atwell. It seems characteristic of the government that they would select three men, none of whom understood the Modoc tongue. The commission offered Jack and his people amnesty if they returned to the reservation and Jack, although he spoke perfect English, replied in his native tongue. No one understood him. Steele thought he accepted the terms and Fairchild thought he rejected them. The next day Steele realized his mistake when he visited the Modoc camp in the lava beds and found them preparing for war

Now Jack told him, in English, that he would willingly quit the warpath if left alone in his tribal lands at Tule Lake. He wanted Meacham, Applegate and six other men to come to the lava beds for a pow-wow. Steele didn't trust his erstwhile friend and he went to General Canby's camp and told him and Meacham not to go. Then he washed his hands of the whole business.

Meacham wired Secretary Delano and Canby appealed to General Sherman. Both were told to go ahead with the parley. This disgusted Applegate and another agent named Case and they resigned, their places being filled by D.S. Dyar the the Rev. Elezear Thomas.

Captain Jack now sent word that he would surrender if he were not sent to Camp Yainax and that none of his people were to be punished. John Sconchin also agreed to surrender. They agreed to meet on March 10 and give up their arms.

General Canby sent four wagons to the lava beds to bring them in but

they couldn't find a single Indian. This smacked of treachery and Meacham again wired Washington and was told by Delano to make peace at all costs. Canby's message was answered with the suggestion he be careful. Sherman was begining to have his doubts.

This went on for another month with Jack arranging meetings and then not showing up. At last Jack agreed, on April 2nd, to meet with the commission at a point halfway between his stronghold and the army camp.

Two hundred troops marched to that spot and set up camp. Jack showed up and told them he wanted the Lost River land back and this was refused as there were settlers there. He then demanded Cottonwood, Hot Creek or Willow Creek, all settled areas, and each time was rebuffed. He left the camp in anger. Riddle and Toby (Winema) who acted as interpreters told Canby that it would be dangerous to have another meeting but the general went ahead with plans for one on April 11th.

General Canby and the Reverend Thomas refused to wear arms but Meacham and Dyer did secrete small pistols on their persons. Riddle and Toby didn't want to go but finally consented.

When they got to the meeting place they found Jack and seven other men, more than had been agreed upon, and all armed, Canby again offered to move them to a warmer climate but Jack renewed his demand for the Lost River area and also said he wouldn't leave the lava beds until he was ready. At about this time a horseman appeared in the distance and Dyar, wanting to warn him away, rode away from the parley. When he returned he did not join the others but lay down on the gound some distance away. While Meacham was talking John Sconchin suddenly told him to shut up. At the same time Hooker Jim walked over to Meacham's horse, untied the overcoat there, put it on, at the same time asking if he didn't look like the Indian agent.

While this was an overt act of hostility Canby kept talking until two Indians ran out of the rocks, each carrying several rifles. Canby asked what this meant and Jack shot him through the head. John Sconchin shot Meacham and Boston Charley killed Thomas. Hooker Jim took out after Dyar who returned his fire and escaped back to the army camp. Riddle and Toby also escaped. Meacham, although shot five times and scalped, managed to live and later recovered.

While all this was going on three of Jack's men who visited Colonel Mason's headquarters at the opposite side of the council and told Lieutenants Boyle and Sherwood they wanted to pow-wow. When the officers turned to advise the Colonel they were both shot in the back. Sherwood died but Boyle recovered. All the Indians fled into the lava beds.

The troops immediately joined battle with fierce resistance from the enemy. Howitzer shells sent the Indians scurrying around the rocks and some, by way of rock tunnels, were able to get between the two divisions of troops, commanded by Colonels Mason and Gillem, and created havoc.

After two days the troops finally captured the heart of the stronghold but found only a few dead and wounded Indians. A head count showed Jack had lost 17 men while the troops had suffered casualties of five dead and 12 wounded. The rest had escaped through the lava tubes.

Gillem decided to wait for more artillery. Somehow his befuddled military mind was thinking along the lines of conventional warfare, which the Indians neither understood nor practiced.

On the night of the 22nd an encampment of about 40 Modocs was found at the southern edge of the Lava beds, about four miles from the army headquarters. Seventy soldiers and

14 Warm Springs Indians went to investigate. They didn't find any Modocs so they sat down to eat their lunch. The soldiers didn't know any better but the Apaches should have. The Modocs opened fire on them and, except for a few veterans, the army split and ran in all directions. The score this time was 27 dead soldiers and 17 wounded while Jack's men went unscathed.

Colonel Gillem was blamed for this and on May 2nd when Colonel Jefferson Davis arrived to take command Gillem was removed from his post and replaced by Colonel Frank Wheaten who had had previous experience against the Modoc. This was not, as generally believed, the same Jeff Davis who was president of the Confederacy. All this occurred after the Civil War.

Two troops of calvary were sent to reconnoiter. On the evening of May 9th as Captain Hasbrouck's company was making camp at Dry Lake Captain Jack and 33 warriors attacked them. Jack was wearing the uniform of the dead Canby. The soldiers stood firm but even so they lost five dead and seven wounded while the Indians suffered one dead brave.

Colonel Mason arrived with reinforcements and thought they had cornered the Indians twenty miles to the south near Steelswamp. By the time they got there Jack had fled. They killed one warrior, two women and captured five women. From the captives they discovered the Modocs had split into two bands. The larger one wanted to surrender but were afraid of reprisals. Jack then had only a few warriors left.

On the 20th of May Davis, now promoted to General, sent two Indian women to find the Modocs and work out the terms of surrender. This band came in on May 22nd, a total of 70, including 12 warriors. Among these were Hooker Jim, Bogus Charley, Shacknasty Jim, Steamboat Frank and Curly-headed Doctor. They had been the ringleaders with Jack but now offered to help find him. Soon they were joined by Boston Charley and Scarfaced Charley. On June 1, 1873 Captain Jack and Sconchin John found themselves with only a handful of warriors pitted against 985 troops, plus a number of their own people. They surrendered.

General Davis ordered the whole tribe removed to the south side of Tule Lake at a place named Boyle's Camp. En route a band of Oregon Guards made a belated arrival and got into the action by firing into the wagons killing five Indians. The regulars drove them off but no charges were ever pressed.

Then the Indians were ordered transfered to Fort Klamath where they faced trial on charges of murder. Captain Jack and some of his subchiefs were hung. Those who had surrendered earlier and then joined in the hunt for Jack were given pardons. Old Sconchin and his people remained in the Klamath reservation but the others were sent to Fort McPherson in Nebraska and later to Indian Territory. At the time of their removal there were 39 braves, 54 women and 60 children left of the tribe. The cost of the war to the government was the lives of over 100 soldiers, a third of a million dollars and nobody knows how many settlers.

**Old harvesting scene, Lake City 1905**

—photo courtesy Heard's Market, Litchfield

Logging on Lassen Creek -- year unknown

Cannon's Sawmill on Lassen Creek in 1907

--photos courtesy Modoc County Museum

## Chapter 4

# Formation of the County

The land now embraced by the Modoc county lines underwent more government change in its day than possibly any other county in the state.

First of all it was a part of Utah Territory and then when Nevada Territory was created from that vast acreage it became part of Nevada. When Nevada became a state, and its boundaries fixed, this area was placed in California and considered a part of Shasta County.

Shasta County then embraced what is now Siskiyou, Shasta, Tehema Lassen and Modoc Counties. In March 1852 this was considered too cumbersome and was divided up with Siskiyou County taking in what is now Modoc with the county seat at Yreka.

This still represented a hardship to the residents of this area, especially those who lived east of the Warner Range. There was only one road over the mountains and a trip to the county seat took some days.

In 1872 an effort was made to found a new county but bogged down over ownership of a stretch of land three miles wide and of a part of the country to the south. The politicians haggled over this until 1874 when they agreed to give the strip to Siskiyou County and the southern portion, Big Valley, to Lassen County.

That same year William I. Cressler, an independent candidate, was elected to the assembly and offered a bill to create a new county to be known as Canby County. Opponents of the bill hoping to kill it, tacked on an amendment to call it Modoc County. As this was at a time when there was a lot of trouble with the Indians it was thought that the name would be rejected. However Cressler, showing considerable political wisdom, accepted the amendment and the bill passed. On February 17, 1874 the Governor Newton Booth signed the act authorizing the new county.

William B. Swearinger, William McCormick, Sr., Columbus Dorris, George Townsend and William McCleur were appointed as the first board of commissioners and Dorris Bridge, now Alturas, was named the temporary county seat. (See 'Alturas')

On May 5, 1874 an election was held to elect county officials and also to select the county seat. The voting for the latter ran as follows; Lake City, 237 votes; Parker Creek, 128 votes; Adin, 117 votes; Dorris Bridge, 65 votes; Joseph Creek, 57 votes; Cedarville, 2 votes and Hot Springs, 1 vote.

Although Lake City was high town on the totem pole it did not have a majority and instead of holding another election the county fathers left the county seat in Dorris Bridge. This was indeed an unusual occasion in western history, not because of the decision in itself, but because the citizens of the other towns did not take any action. In those days the county seat was a prized plum. It meant a strong and steady flow of prosperous business to the town so selected. The annuls of the west report all sorts of skullduggery to obtain or retain this distinction. During elections the populations of graveyards were voted; passengers taken off of trains and stagecoaches to cast their ballots. There have been instances of the citizens of one town raiding another town in the dead

of night to seize the records and so bring the county seat to their fair city. When Amador County was a part of Calaveras County some people from Jackson went to Double Springs and succeeded in getting the County Clerk drunk. While he was passed out they packed up the official documents and brought them back to Jackson.

As actions such as these were more common than rare in the west, and considering the difference of votes in the balloting, it is indeed surprising that nothing more was said or done when it was announced that Dorris Bridge would remain as the county seat. For some reason the citizens of the competing towns didn't seem to care. This was demonstrated even more so when Cedarville, then one of the larger towns in the county, cast only 2 votes in its claim for the honor.

In the first election Joseph Mark was elected Sheriff and Tax Collector; N. Fitzgerald, Clerk, Auditor and and Recorder; Gamalie F. Harris, District Attorney; Nathaniel R. Rine, Treasurer; L.W. Harris, Assessor; H.G. Hill, Superintendent of Schools; Jes. W. Howard, Surveyor and John J. Lane as Coroner and Public Administrator. Three supervisors were chosen: J.M. Hornback, Daniel P. Barnes and Emanuel Lauer. At first there were only three supervisoral districts, later there were five.

County officials in those days were not paid princely salaries. A supervisor received $4.99 per day plus 25 cents per mile for travel, but not more than $200 per year total for room, board and mileage.

The Treasurer and the Assessor got $600 per year while the District Attorney was paid $500. The Superintindent of Schools got $300, the County Clerk $150; the sheriff was to be paid the same as the Sheriff of Siskiyou County, whatever that was, and the rest of the county officials received no pay whatsoever. It was also agreed that the county could not spend over $20,000 per year—oh, what happy days those years must have been.

After 1891 the offices of county clerk, auditor and recorder were separated and the assembly and senatorial districts were reorganized.

While the new county had a sheriff it was apparently a custom of the people to save him as much work as possible.

In the fall of 1877 the chief herder for Charley Worling dropped in at Roseberry and Knight's store in Adin and asked to look at some pipes. While he was making his selection a gentleman named John McCoy entered the store and it was soon apparent McCoy had something against pipes. He brushed past the customer and, taking the pipes out of the case one by one, began throwing them over his shoulder. The clerk, Oliver O. McDowell, politely asked him to desist while the bewildered herder stooped to pick up the merchandise. This enraged McCoy who drew a knife and exclaiming 'You will, will you?' promptly plunged the blade into the sheepman's chest. He then walked out of the store crossed over to a saloon and went into the back room where he lay down. There he was found and tied up by a group of citizens.

They were all for hanging him then when Adin McDowell remonstrated and said the herder wasn't dead yet. When he died there was more talk about lynching but cooler heads prevailed and the sheriff was summoned. It took him three days to get there and on the way back he was stopped by a party of masked men and McCoy hung to a tree. Whether the lynch party were friends of the sheepherder or just pipe smokers has never been determined.

There were other hangings in the county, including the Hall lynching at Lookout, but all seemed based on more mundane reasoning.

## Chapter 5

# The Lookout Lynchings

In the early morning of May 31, 1901, in the little town of Lookout, in western Modoc County, a group of citizens entered the Myers Hotel, took four persons from the custody of the law officers and hanged them. Then, as an afterthought, they returned to the hotel and brought another out to the bridge over the Pit River and pushed him into eternity. The bodies were still dangling when the town awoke later in the morning.

The Myers Hotel served as a jail but as there was no way to lock prisoners in, they were bedded down in the hotel barroom and guarded by deputies. On this night there were two deputies on duty one of whom, James W. Brown, is reported to have been in connivance with the lynchers. The victims consisted of Calvin Hall, age about 70, his sons, Frank, 26, James, 19, Martin, 16, and a man named Dan Yantis. They had all been charged with petty theft and were awaiting trial in the morning.

There were some who said at the time that this represented a return to the good old days of the Gold Rush when crimes were dealt with surely and swiftly. But it is doubtful if the good old days ever saw a mass hanging for such petty crimes. Miners' courts would probably have sentenced them to be whipped, perhaps branded, and then run out of camp. Yet, before a too harsh judgement is brought against the 'lynch mob' there are some extenuating circumstances.

Calvin Hall came to California in 1849 to mine. In 1861 he enlisted in the Second Regiment of the California Calvary and was stationed at Fort Crook, then located near Fall River Mills. He became an authority on the Indians and their ways though whether this came while he was still a soldier, or after he was discharged, is unknown. At any rate he married an Indian, Mary, and went to work at a sawmill there. At some time in the 1870's he moved to Big Valley, near Lookout, and became the clerk for the new school District. This would seem to indicate that he was a well educated man and presumably thought well of by his neighbors.

However, his wife seems to have been a different question. From what has been told and written about her it would seem as though she was not so much immoral as amoral. The story of her life would most certainly be rated 'X' by the motion picture industry.

At last her wanton ways became too much for Calvin and he divorced her in February of 1885, but not before they had four children: Mary Nevada, Dora Dasey, Charles Calvin and James Warren. Mary also had

several other offspring, including Frank and Martin who were guests of honor at the necktie party. Calvin claimed they were no relation although they bore the Hall name.

After the divorce Calvin took up farming and specialized in raising tomatoes which he sold throughout the county. Divorce didn't mean much to Mary and she moved in with him, now as a housekeeper rather than a wife, and their children, his and hers, all settled down together.

Hall became active in politics, especially in the Republican party and seems to have been popular although there were growing suspicions in regards to his sons – and Mary's.

In about 1900 a newcomer showed up in the valley, a reputed ex-convict named Dan Yantis. It is not known who else, except for Mary, gave him a hearty welcome. She went so far as to share her bed with him. It isn't known just how old Mary was but if she was married in 1865 she must have been in her fifties by the time Yantis showed up and so it must be presumed that either she was one helluva good looking gal or Danny boy wasn't the most discriminating soul in the valley. Calvin apparently couldn't care less – Mary by that time had been his housekeeper only for some fifteen years.

Although the area had been plagued by a series of petty thefts things didn't really get serious until Yantis arrived. It is more than possible he showed them how to get things organized. Calvin may have been an innocent bystander to all this but he must have known what was going on and condoned same. Weeping sob sisters might cry out that these poor boys came from a broken home and were raised in the midst of moral depravity. Maybe they were, but if Calvin had exerted some parental authority and kicked a couple of rascals out he might have died peacefully in bed and not at the end of a rope.

What also irked the people of the valley was the cruelty of the boys. They delighted in torturing animals and in performing acts of deliberate nuisance.

Then there was a little element of romance involved. A neighboring rancher, Isom Eades, at one time wanted to marry Mary Nevada. For some reason Hall wouldn't stand for this. So Eades married an Indian gal named Sally. There must have been some variance in their ages for then Frank Hall became enamoured of Sally and tried to make a little time in that pasture. Eades was irritated to no end by his wife's popularity and especially when he considered the wolf in the fold to be the son of the man who had denied him his daughter's hand in marriage. When the lynchings took place and Eades was one of the instigators it might be assumed that his interest in the matter went a little deeper than just ridding the valley of some thieves.

There were a number of charges made against the Halls and a number of arrests all of which would just take up time to detail but all of which culminated in the final arrest.

Calvin Hall, Yantis and the three boys were arrested for stealing a pitchfork. But the complaint was so worded that it was called Feloniously steal'. This meant that conviction would have sent the whole gang packing off to the penitentiary and have given the valley a few years of peace.

Eades and R.E. Leventon rode over to Alturas to present the case to the grand jury only to find that it had adjourned for that term. Then they went to see District Attorney E.C. Bonner who told them this particular charge was a misdemeanor, not a felony. This meant either a fine or a month or so in the county bucket and so both men were slightly disappointed to say the least.

In the meantime the three boys, and Yantis were being held for trial in Myers Hotel, whose proprietor, J.R. Myers, was also the Justice of Peace; Calvin, seemingly still a semi-respected citizen, was released on his own recognizance but the others couldn't make bail.

When Eades and Leventon returned with the sad news some of the boys began to gather to discuss further action. Who knows, they may have had a nip or two to help their deliberations.

At any rate they worked out an arrangement with Deputy Constable James W. Brown that when everyone else had left the hotel he was to step out on the porch and light a cigar. That was the signal to come and get 'em.

The men swarmed into the hotel, awoke the prisoners who were asleep, and started them down the street towards the main bridge over the Pit River. Myers tried to prevent them but his wife and daughter talked him out of doing anything.

When they were part way down the street Frank Hall had a premonition of what was going to happen. He tried to break away and, after a wild struggle, was knocked out and hung from the small bridge over the slough. The other three were taken to the big bridge, ropes put around their neck and they were pushed over the side. Whether or not they fought, prayed or cursed is not known. The only witnesses were the lynchers and they weren't talking.

During all this Calvin slept on and it wasn't until the four had been hung that someone remembered him. Maybe it was Eades, recalling how he had been refused Mary Nevada's hand, or someone who feared his vengeance. So they went back for him and dragged him out in his night-shirt and marched him down the street to the big bridge. It is said that Myers tried to prevent this hanging as did Deputy Brown and another constable named Carpenter.

When word spread throughout the valley the residents were shocked and while many believed that the punishment didn't fit the crime by the same token they didn't exactly miss the Halls either.

The county officials took a slightly different viewpoint and prepared to take action when Governor Gage got into the act. He offered a reward of $5,000 for the arrest and conviction of the lynchers. And he also said he was sending Assistant Attorney General Charles N. Post and Deputy Attorney General George A. Sturtevant to Alturas to conduct the prosecution. This didn't sit too well with the people of Modoc County. They felt they could wash their own dirty linen and when Sacramento got into the act a feeling of resentment arose which gradually turned into a sentiment for the lynch mob.

Brown, Eades and Leventon were arrested first and indited by the reassembled grand jury. Facing murder charges they were lodged in the Modoc County Jail.

Brown was first brought to trial and defended by J.E. Raker, a local attorney of considerable legal fame. The court was presided over by Judge J.W. Harrington who seemed to feel that the dignity of the law had been offended by the act and that the culprits should surely suffer. Throughout the trial he and Raker went at it tooth and nail with Raker receiving numerous fines and a few days in the bucket for contempt.

One of the issues they debated over most strenuously was the use of one Danny Miller, a reputed gun fighter, by Attorney General Post as a body guard. It would seem that Post did not have the utmost confidence in the local lawmen to protect his person.

According to Lance E. Estes who wrote a newspaper article about the trial the following occurred one day in court.

**This jury investigated the Lookout Murders**

--photo courtesy Heard's Market, Litchfield

Raker was questioning a witness and asked him if he knew Danny Miller. Raker put it this way:

'You know little Danny, don't you. Little Danny and his two guns? Why, there's little Danny now, that little whipper-snapper over there.'

This was too much for the diminutive gunman who came to his feet and drew both guns. Raker stood and stared at him but the jury, less heroic, hit the dirt in all directions. The judge admonished Raker to quit making trouble but never said a word to Miller. However, after that day's session the foreman of the jury asked the judge if the jury could attend court armed with revolvers. They didn't have too much faith in the representatives of the state and they might have had good cause. Miller was in trouble several times outside of court and on one occasion was locked up for disturbing the peace and had to be bailed out by the prosecution forces.

Although it is customary for the Attorney General's office to assist the local District Attorney it would seem that Bonner was shifted out of the picture entirely, apparently with the connivance of the judge. One reason for this might have been the following letter Bonner wrote to Harrington:

'My Dear Judge: I arrived home yesterday afternoon to find that petitions for dismissal are being signed by leading citizens all over the county, irrespective of political lines or geographical. My candid judgement is the entire county desires it. I honestly consider further prosecution entirely useless of these defendants. Even the Grand Jury itself or a majority have expressed a desire for dismissal of the cases. Unless you can give me strong additional evidence I will consider it my duty to move dismissal of these cases. I think you and the rest of us can at this late date dismiss with perfect propriety to all concerned. I do not feel disposed to continue these matters.

'Please advise me at once in the matter as to your wishes. These defendants have been held practically in solitary confinement for five months and the county sympathy is very strong.'

Very truly yours

E.C. Bonner
District Attorney for
Modoc County.

There are some discrepancies in the letter. If the Grand Jury had been against a trial why did they indite the men in the first place? And it was rather well known that the prisoners were constantly visited by friends who spent hours talking or playing cards with them. That's not exactly solitary confinement. Finally why was the Judge asked to supply 'additional evidence'?

The judge refused the request and the Attorney General's office deplored the asking but it was obvious where the sympathies of the county lay. Brown was found not guilty and as the same evidence applied to the others no further trials were held.

The state attorney, along with Danny Miller, and two of the lynch mob who had turned state's evidence quietly and quickly left town. Raker was greeted as a hero and that was the end of the Lookout Lynching case. It is not reported but may well be presumed that there was very little stealing down in Big Valley for some time thereafter.

The main gate

Deserted barracks

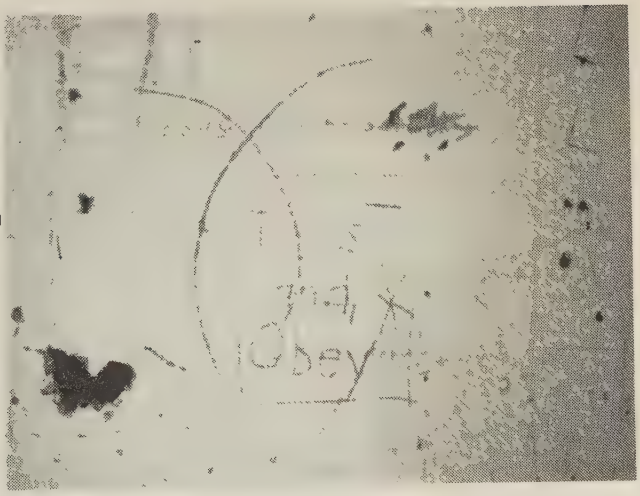
# World War II Japanese Camp

Back in the days of World War 11 the hysteria of the people, the stupidity of the government and the cupidity of a few California land owners combined to inflict a tragedy upon a minority of loyal American citizens.

Shortly after Pearl Harbor a government order went out to round up all Japanese nationals and people of Japanese descent and cage them in concentration camps throughout the country. The one at Tule Lake was one

**Inside the barracks**

**Someone had faith**




of the larger ones and the buildings stand today as a memory of our most shameful acts.

The loyalty of these people to their government, even after their imprisonment, was shown when the all-volunteer "Go-for-broke" Regimental Combat team, consisting entirely of Soldiers of Japanese descent, won more unit citations and individual decorations than any other group in either the European or Pacific theatres.

Even today these people have never been completely compensated. Many of them, embroiled in bureaucratic red tape, are still trying to regain lands stolen from them and monies impounded.

**Little High Rock Canyon where bodies were found**

+Photo courtesy of Modoc Co. Museum

**Deserted camp of Indians**

-Photo courtesy of Modoc Co. Museum

**The posse ready to leave Denio Ranch**

- Photo courtesy of Modoc Co. Museum

**The bodies as they were found**

-Photo courtesy of Modoc Co. Museum

**Bringing out the bodies**

-Photo courtesy of Modoc Co. Museum

## Chapter 6

# High Rock Canyon Massacre

When Bertrand Indiano, a Basque sheepherder, rode out of the sheep camp of the Humphrey-Cambron Cattle Company that morning in January of 1911 he never thought he would wind up being bait for a trap that would cost the lives of four men, including himself -- and be the start of the last Indian War in the West.

He was riding up Little High Rock canyon, just across the Nevada border when he ran across the carcass of a freshly butchered steer. Footprints in the snow, and fresh blood of the animal warned Bertrand the rustlers were not far distant. Retreat was a far better strategy than heroism - and besides he didn't have a gun with him.

He slowly made his way back down the canyon, sensing that eyes were watching him all the way. Back at the ranch house he found one of the owners, Harry Cambron, and two other sheepherders, John Laxague and Peter Erramouspe, both Basques. He told the story of his find and while it was generally supposed the steer had been killed by some wandering cowhand, or by a settler who needed meat, it was decided to investigate further.

The next morning the four men rode

back up the canyon. Indiano wanted to follow the rimrock but Cambron overruled him. He said it would be too hard on the horses to buck the drifts. For some reason none of the Basques were armed and the rancher carried only a revolver.

They found the dead animal and started to dismount when the air was rent by war cries and several Indians leaped out of the willows firing at the men. The three sheepherders were killed immediately. Cambron managed to get out his gun and shoot one Indian before he was struck in the elbow and again in the head by bullets. He fell dead by the trail. It was later divulged that the Indians could have killed Indiano but had held off, knowing he would return with other men. The trap had been set deliberately and had worked flawlessly.

It would seem that four men would be discovered missing sooner, but due to the vastness of the country, a lack of communications, and the fact they often were gone for long stretches of time looking after cattle and sheep, more than two weeks passed before friends and relatives started to feel any uneasiness. It was known they planned to move some sheep and it often took two weeks to make such a move.

Thinking they may have run into some difficulty after three weeks had passed Warren Fruits, a cowboy, and a Mr. Bryant rode up to the line camp. Failing to find any sign of them there they rode up the canyon happening, by chance, upon the scene of the massacre. There they saw the remnants of the steer, some clothing caught on underbrush and signs of blood. Further explanation disclosed the bodies of the men in a dense growth of willows in the dry creek bed.

They hurried back to the nearest ranch, a sheep camp operated by the Humphrey-Cambron Company and here they found Charles Demick, the area manager for the Miller and Lux Ranches and Sid Street, an Eaglesville rancher. All four men left post haste for Eagleville to report the news. This was across the California line in Modoc County.

Preparations were made to bring out the bodies. A posse rode forth and was able to get a four-horse team and wagon to within a mile and a half of the scene. The men then went in and cut timber to make a travois. Because of the sub-zero weather the bodies had been frozen together and they had great difficulty in getting them apart.

Once the bodies were back in Eagleville another posse was formed to ride after the murderers. Demick was placed in charge of a group of 22 men and they left for Little High Canyon on February 16, 1911, four weeks after the killings had taken place.

The posse was composed of a mixed group of Californians and Nevadans and included Sheriff Elzie Smith of Modoc County; Henry Hughes; William Parson; Ed Hogle; George Holmes; Joe Reeder; Jack Ferguson; Ben F. Cambron, brother of the murdered man; Warren Frits; Mort West; Frank Perry; O.D. Van Norman; Sid Street; Fred Hill; Gilbert Jackson; James Baty, from Nevada; Sheriff Ferrill of Washoe County; Captain Donnelley of the Nevada State Police; and three of his men, Neward, Stone and Duck. It seems unusual that with two sheriffs and a state police captain along that Demick would be chosen as leader. Even more so when, a few days later, due to pressing personal business elsewhere, he had to leave the posse.

At first Indians were not suspected as there had not been any trouble with the Piutes for many years, and also because none had been seen in the area for quite some time. It was thought that the killings had been the result of a fight with a band of

rustlers.

However, after inspecting the scene carefully the men found some shoes, arrows and other evidence that Indians had been the killers. One most damaging piece of evidence was the remains of a brush wickiup near the scene. On a rock overlooking the wickiup, were signs someone had laid there, acting as a lookout, while covered with bark and brush as a protection against the cold.

Trails led off in two directions. One went down the canyon and the other over the top and eastwards. In order to follow both trails the posse broke into two segments with Jim Baty and Charles Demick taking the high trail and the others following the canyon. It was later discovered that the squaws and children had gone one direction and the braves, the other.

However, the two groups met later at High Rock Lake where the Indians had once more come together and camped that night. The next day they trailed them up Willow Creek Canyon and found the place where they had made camp overlooking the Black Rock desert.

After this the tribesmen began to fan out either singularly, or in small groups, and it made tracking very difficult. They crossed the desert and camped near Hardin City in Nevada. The next day they went over the Jackson Mountains.

Not only was this very difficult terrain to traverse but the weather conditions made it almost impossible. The nights would put a crust on the snow but by mid-afternoon this would melt and the horses plunged through and often cut their legs on the still frozen segments.

One mule was loaded with ammunition and carefully watched for it was feared the Indians might make a sudden attack and spook the animal, leaving the men nearly defenseless. Demick said he kept a careful eye on the animal and was prepared to shoot it if this occured. Why they never split the ammunition up amongst all the members of the posse was never mentioned.

On and on they went and finally camped in a place called Paradise Valley, about 30 miles north of Winnemucca. Here four men left the party; James Baty, Gil Jackson, Fred Hill and Sid Street, because their horses gave out on them; and Charles Dimick, because of pressing company business. The others then continued on to Golconda where they set up headquarters. Scouts were sent out to look for signs of the marauders and soon brought back word they were camped in the Kelley Creek area.

At eight in the evening of February 25, nine days and some 200 miles after leaving the scene of the massacre, the posse rode out to catch up with the scouting party. They met at noon the next day at Rabbit Creek, about seven miles from Kelley Creek and about thirty miles northeast of Golconda.

In the distance they could see campfire smoke and noted horses tethered nearby.

An attempt was made to creep up on the camp but they were seen by a squaw bringing water from a spring. She ran screaming back to the camp to alarm the others.

It was later learned that Shoshone Mike, the leader of the band, had posted guards at various places around the camp but the posse had slipped by them. It was just by chance they had encountered the squaw. Incidentally, Shoshone Mike was not a Shoshone -- he was an Apache renegade who had come to Oregon and thence down into Modoc County and Nevada.

As soon as the squaw gave the alarm three Indian bucks ran out to gather up the horses. The white men rode to cut them off and they retreated to the camp and re-appeared with guns.

Sheriff Smith, who now seems to have taken charge of the group even though they were in Nevada, requested an Indian scout, Skinny Pascal, to speak with the tribe and tell them if they surrendered no harm would come to them. He did so and returned to report "Boys, they no quit. Shoot quick".

Immediately thereafter a shot rang out, the possemen took cover in the rocks and the battle was on. Three Indians were killed in the first volley one of whom was Shoshone Mike.

Three of the Indians attempted to provide a covering fire while the rest escaped up a canyon. Captain Donnelly shouted not to harm the women and children. He shouted this so loudly that the squaws heard it and took advantage of this order in a strange way. They stood before their men to protect them from the posse's fire.

When it was seen they might make a retreat into the canyon some of the pursuers moved to cut them off and soon the entire tribe was surrounded.

As the circle narrowed a buck jumped up from behind a squaw and fired at Ed Hogle. He staggered back, cried "I'm shot," walked about ten feet, and fell to the ground. The Indian was dropped where he stood. He was later found to be carrying the pistol owned by Harry Cambron.

The Indians then made a run for it and managed to break through the cordon but were trapped on a hill about a mile distant where the rest of the warriors were killed.

O.D. Van Norman and George Holmes captured a squaw who Van Norman said was the hardest fighting female he ever encountered. She was about fifteen years old. After she was quieted down she gave an account of most of what had happened. A thirteen-year old boy also fought like a demon to escape capture and then tried to beat his brains out against a saddle. Eight Indians were buried on the battle site and the others shipped back to the reservation.

Pascal talked to the squaw and she told him the following story:

When they left the reservation they had raided a Miller and Lux Ranch, killed a Chinese cook and stolen some horses. When they saw Indiano in Little High Rock Canyon they thought him to be a law officer and when he returned they were certain of this and so they had ambushed the party.

They had fired their last shot in killing Ed Hogle.

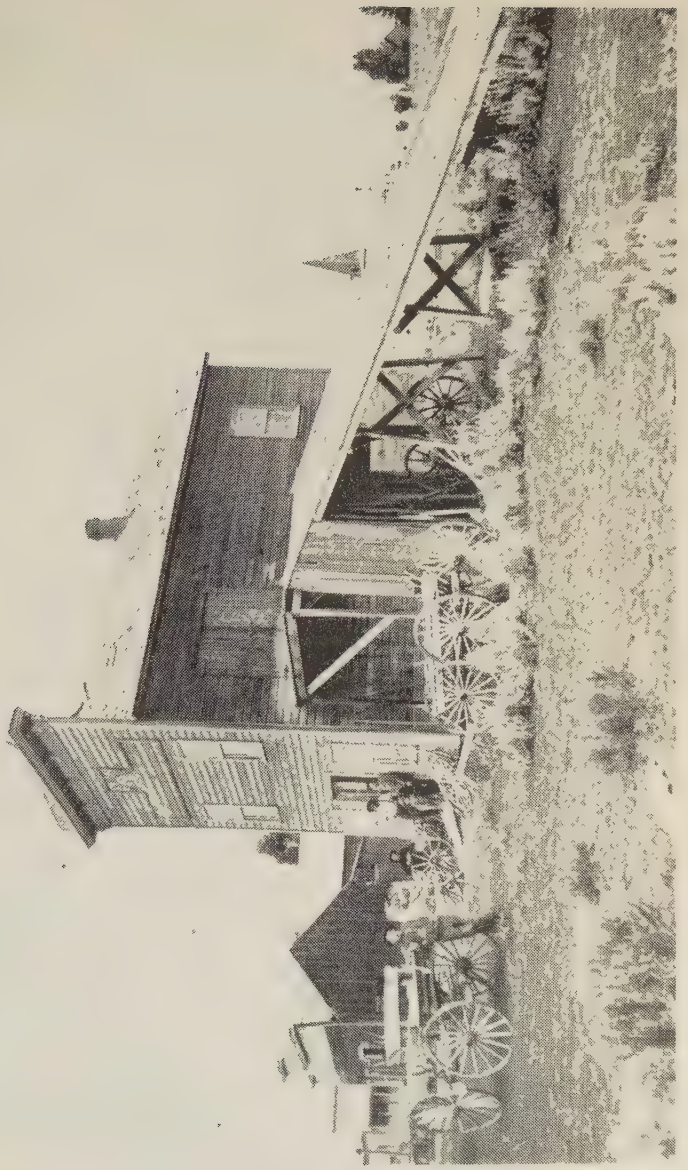
When the dead bodies were searched they found Cambron's checkbook and $30 in cash on Shoshone Mike, and Erramouspe's upperlip and mustache, along with the Chinese queqe, were found in the belt of the captured squaw. No charges were pressed against her however.

When the posse returned to Eagleville they found out that the State of Nevada had posted a $5000 reward to which the Humphry-Cambron Cattle Company had added another $1000, and the residents of Surprise Valley had further sweetened it with $500. As the Nevada officers were not permitted to legally share in the reward it was divided up between up between eleven men.

The final climax came when Smith managed to get himself appointed as collector of the reward monies. Then came word that the State of Nevada would refuse to pay the reward and was instead going to charge the possemen with murder.

As foolish as this might have seemed there was some belief in it and it supposedly caused Sheriff Smith to make several trips to Reno before it was settled. He then stuck the other men $1500 for his time and expenses.

And that was the end of the last Indian War in the west - fought by men from Modoc County in the barren desert of Nevada.



**John Wood Wagon and Carriage Shop as it appeared in 1896. The first upstairs, later it was the meeting room for the K.P.S. and Eagle lodges. John Wood stands by wagon** --photo courtesy Modoc County Museum

**Fourth of July in 1893**

—Photo courtesy Modoc County Museum

**Alturas on the Fourth of July, 1916**
—photo courtesy Modoc County Museum

**Senator Tallant Tubbs visited Alturas when this Autogyro landed there. Date unknown.**

—photo courtesy Modoc County Museum

**The old Farmer's Stable at Alturas built about 1874**
--photo courtesy Modoc County Museum

**Alturas as it appeared in 1905**

--photo courtesy Modoc County Museum

**The old railroad station at Alturas**

--photo courtesy Modoc County Museum

**Old view of the Modoc Auto Company.**

--photo courtesy Modoc County Museum

**William Meyer's Big Tree Hotel**

-photo courtesy Modoc County Museum

**Lauer and Sons flour mill near Alturas. Built in 1879 it burned in 1941. Caretaker perished in flames.**

-Photo courtesy of Modoc Co. Museum

## Chapter 7

# Alturas

On a May day in 1870 two horsemen rode into the Pit River Valley and found a vast and excellent unowned range. They were Presley A. Dorris and a companion, Henry Fitzhugh.

Dorris immediately saw the advantages of this area and laid claim to it, sending over a herd to graze and to prove his ownership. He returned with his nephew, Jim Dorris, and constructed a bridge across the Pit River. More members of the family arrived. James came down from Oregon with his family and settled on the south side of the river and Carlos J Dorris came over from Shasta County and located on the north side. It is believed that Presley had a partner named John Jackson who later owned the X.L. Ranch six miles north of Alturas. Other early arrivals were Preston Hayes and Martin Kelley. Their cabins formed the nucleus of a settlement which was named Dorris Bridge.

James and Carlos exchanged property and James built a cabin on what is now Henderson Street in Alturas. This was used as a stopover place for chance travelers although at that time there was no road to the bridge. It had been built solely for cattle.

In 1871 a freight line operator by

the name of Tichnor built a road from the Pit River Valley to Yreka. The road crossed the bridge and travel began to pick up. That same year a man named Munson started a mail route which began at Burgettville (now Glendale) and ran to Summer Lake, Oregon. He nailed a cigar box on the wall of the Dorris cabin and charged ten cents to deliver a letter. The settlers did their own sorting. In November of '71 a third brother, Columbus, brought his family up from Benecia and the three brothers now began to construct a unique house. Each brother had his own quarters in the structure but it was all under one roof. This was built about one–half mile south of the bridge. Later a fourth brother, Cyrus G. brought his family to the community.

By December of 1872 the little settlement consisted of a few log cabins, James Dorris' Inn, a blacksmith shop and a saloon. It was about that time the Modoc War started and soldiers from the First Cavalry, en route to the war, stopped for the night there. A poker game started and the soldiers won the saloon from its owner. He spent a worried night but the next morning the 'yellowlegs' were told by their officer they could not take the saloon with them nor could they stay and run it. So, they gave it back to the original owner.

Slowly the town began to grow. In 1873 E. Lauer and Sons opened a store at the corner of what is now Carlos and Main Streets. A public school was started in the blacksmith shop but this didn't work out too well and it was moved to the present site of the American Legion Park. James Dorris taught all grades. Another building went up nearby which served as a dance hall, theatre, church and from time to time as Courthouse. The first church services were Baptist with the Reverend Lew Henderson officiating. When Modoc County was organized, a shed with three rooms were added to provide quarters for the County Clerk, Sheriff and District Attorney.

The Post Office was moved into a room adjoining the Lauer store and when this was destroyed by fire the building was replaced by a stone edifice. To provide building material Henry Fitzhugh opened a rock quarry west of town near the river. John Thomas became the first stone mason.

In 1874 Billy Combs bought the James Dorris cabin and the following year built a new hotel on the corner of Main and Carlos.

Other new business houses to establish here were the blacksmith shop operated by Geroux; saddle and harness shop run by Al Gagnon; George McKay began the first planer mill and John E. Estes and George Garrett the first carpenter shop.

Joe Mark started a livery stable at the corner of First and Main; Dr. Hill came here to practice medicine; Dr. Epperson was the first dentist; a man named Woodmansee opened a butcher shop; Mrs. Ewing was the first milliner; H. Nichols opened the ice–cream parlor; a Chinese family had a laundry; another family on the Madden ranch baked and delivered bread and pastry; and Chapman and Slater launched the first newspaper – 'The Modoc Independent.' Where Main Street came to the river a fellow named Huffman started a restaurant. Gabe Haskins organized the first band.

There was no bank and so the Lauer Store kept cash deposits in their safe and honored checks or drafts drawn against those funds. For years this was Alturas' only banking facility.

On February 17, 1874 Modoc County officially became a county and the first Board of Supervisors were scheduled to meet on March 10. However, only Columbus Dorris and George Townsend showed up for the ground was covered with snow. This was not a quorum so they adjourned until the next day, and then again until March 12th when William McCleur arrived, having walked all the way

from Adin to attend the meeting.

A general election was called for May 5, 1874 to decide who the county officers should be and where the county seat should be located. Lake City received the most votes but it was not enough to give it a majority over the other towns in the county so Dorris Bridge continued to serve in that capacity. However, for some reason, that name wasn't considered dignified enough and G.F. Harris, the county's representative in the State Assembly thought it should be changed.

He made out a list of names which included Veronica, Pitt, Pittsburg, Alta and Alturas and submitted them to several of the leading citizens who expressed a liking for the latter. The name 'Dorris' had already been utilized by a settlement in Siskiyou County which might explain how it missed consideration. Anyway, Alturas was chosen and Alturas it has remained ever since. Incidentally it is a Spanish derivative which generally means 'little valley in the mountains'.

New problems now arose. Offices for the newly elected officials had to be constructed. J. Holleman had been elected Superior Court Judge and he solved his own problem by building a house at the corner of Carlos and Court Streets which he used as both dwelling and office. N.B. Rine, a clerk in Lauer's Store, was elected county Treasurer and he combined both jobs by having his office there also. Across the store H.G. Hill, the school superintendent, used an old dry goods crate as a desk.

The first county building to be erected was the county jail. This burned down the following year and another 2" x 6" double spiked plank jail was erected. In 1879 the county clerk's office was built, a stone building in the now American Legion park.

It wasn't until 1884 a courthouse was built. This was replaced in 1914. Alturas got a city hall in 1911.

An elementary school was built in 1884 and served all grades until 1911 when a new structure was erected. This was called the Mary L. Raker School after a long time teacher. This school was destroyed by fire in 1940.

Modoc Union High School opened its first classes in September, 1903 in the old Pythian Hall on First Street between Main and Court Streets. George B. Finnegan was the principal and the only teacher. In 1908 a stone building went up on Alturas Heights where the present high school is. This building was condemned in 1939 and the present school built.

Alturas became an incorporated town on September 16, 1901 and the first Board of Trustees consisted of E. Lauer, Chairman; J.M. Thompson, J.T. Laird, J.H. Dervan and A.B. Estes. I.W. Gibbins was elected clerk.

At first the town meetings were held in the Masonic Hall but later the council purchased, from John Wood, an old two story building which had been used as a wagon shop. This became known as the Town Hall.

In 1911 a brick building was erected on North Street between Howard and Rine Streets to house the city offices. fire department and pump house.

On October 8, 1928 Alturas became a city by ordinance of the council.

Water was an early problem. Most people had their own wells and when a fire broke out it could only be fought by bucket brigade. Several times fire ravaged Main Street. In the 1910–11 period two deep wells were dug where the City Hall now stands. The water from these were pumped into tanks and supplied the city. It not only made fire fighting easier but the town began to lose its desert appearance.

D.R. Mulkey, I.W. Gibbins and J.W. C. Cummings opened a light plant here in 1900 and supplied the town with power furnished by steam. The service was often interrupted by drought or frost and most residents

kept a kerosene lantern handy. In 1928 the California Public Service Corporation took over the plant and put in a diesel generator.

As mentioned before the first banking facilities were in the general store. In 1902 it was chartered as an official bank and known as the 'Bank of Modoc County'. However it was liquidated in 1913.

In 1904 the 'First National Bank of Alturas' was formed by B.F. Lynip who sold the stock and served as cashier until 1918. It was first located where the Niles Theatre now is but later moved to the south-west corner of Main and North Streets. In 1928 it was absorbed by Bank of America Corporation.

The 'Alturas State Bank' was started in 1913 with A. Hafer as cashier. It was located on the north-west corner of the Niles Hotel Building but suddenly closed its doors in 1922 – much to the dismay and financial discomfort of its depositors.

In 1905 F.E. Bush started a bank in Cedarville which he called the 'Surprise Valley Bank' but when Cedarville seemed on the verge of blowing away he moved to Alturas in 1924 and changed the name to the 'Modoc County Bank'. Like many other banks across the country it failed in 1933. One reason for this failure was that the bank over-extended itself in trying to help cattlemen who had been hit by three years of drouth. In more recent years the Wells Fargo Bank opened a branch here.

The first transportation into Alturas was by stage coach and by freight wagons drawn by teams of four to sixteen horses. They came and went between Alturas and Redding, Red Bluff, Yreka and Reno. It is said that the Reno trip took three weeks to come and go.

In 1881 the Nevada, California and Oregon Railroad built a line up from Reno. For a while it stopped at Likely but after a number of years proceeded on to the southern limits of Alturas. While so doing one of the screwy incidents in railroad building occured here. A man named Myers owned land across the right of way. He was ready to stop construction with an injunction once they touched his property and then he probably planned to stick them for more than the property was worth.

The railroad crew worked up to the property line, then lay down their tools and took off for town. This was on a Saturday afternoon and Myers, knowing he couldn't get an injunction on Sunday and not thinking the crew would work that day anyway, also departed. But the crew came back about mid-night and worked all night. They reached Alturas in the morning and were loudly cheered by the residents. Myers then accepted the railroad's terms.

Alturas was the end of the line then and the railroad built a fine stone building at Eighth and Main which is now the Elks Lodge. Later it continued service on to Lakeview in Oregon. They charged large rates for passage and after 1920, when the automobile started coming into its own, they lost much of their clintele. This was a narrow gauge line. It was widened in 1928–29 and sold to the Southern Pacific in 1929 who built a connecting line to Klamath Falls. Even with reduced rates business continued to fall off and on January 1, 1938 passenger service was discontinued.

The lumber industry was first represented by small mills. In 1929 the Pickering Lumber Company constructed in western Alturas what was considered to be the largest milling plant of its kind in the world. This turned Alturas into a boom town with prices soaring and all sorts of dreams concocted. But the bubble burst in 1932 when the Pickering Company went down with the depression and the mill never even had its machinery installed. The mill was

unused for twelve years and finally leased by the White Pine Lumber Company. A couple of years later the Loyola Foundation purchased the property and White Pine Lumber continued the lease. In 1959 it was sold to the present owners, The Calander Pine Corporation.

Some other businesses which started with high hopes and failed in Alturas were H.C. Watson's Creamery which started in 1914 and then closed after a couple of years. It reopened in 1923 as Mountain Lily Dairy Products but is no longer around.

S.T. Ballard had a planing mill on the corner of North and Howard Streets prior to 1940 but bad health put him out of business.

In 1924 a stock company was formed to operate a box factory. It went kerplunk three years later and a lot of investors' money went down the drain. Earlier a pencil factory started up but was soon abandoned.

At one time or another Alturas saw a procession of newspapers. The aforementioned Modoc Independent was founded by Slater and Chapman; then there was the Alturas Herald with Ed Herslinger as publisher; the Modoc Republican was edited by A.F. Shortel; the Alturas New Era was founded by Ben Barney who sold to R.L. Sloss and later to Mrs. May L. Yates. The esteemed Colonel Wm. Thompson started the Alturas Plainsdealer and this paper went through a series of owners before being merged with the Modoc County Times. Both later were taken in by the Modoc County Record which was founded by N.C. Sloss. Claud McCracken started a tabloid, the Modoc Daily Mail in 1937 and published it for several months before he was shot. Details on the why and wherefore are missing.

One of the first garages in town was built by Mr. and Mrs. J.A. Yates in 1908. They also owned the New Era newspaper at the time. Modoc County roads were not the best in those days and the car owners usually put their autos in storage for the winter. This was bad for the garage business so to perk things up the Yates converted their garage into a skating rink during the winter months. Later when cars and roads improved they abandoned this sideline.

But in 1913 they did build the first motion picture theatre in Alturas and had the sloping floor so constructed that it could be inclined for the shows and leveled for dancing or skating on nights when there were no shows.

**A Warm Springs Indian scout who fought with the army**

--photo courtesy National Park Service

## Chapter 8

# Battle of Infernal Caverns

Overshadowed by the Modoc Indian War in the Lava Beds of northern Modoc and eastern Siskiyou County, was the battle of the Infernal Caverns which took place near Likely in September 1867.

In the general operation against the Modoc, General George Crook, on September 27, 1867, pursued a small band of Indians into the crater of an extinct volcano. This was a mixed band of Modoc, Pit River, and Piutes.

Crook led a company of 108 enlisted men and three officers, Lieutenants Madigan, Eskridge and Parnell. Parnell was British by birth, had served with the English army, was a survivor of the famous charge of the Light Brigade and had later served with the Union forces in the Civil War.

The detachment was accompanied by 15 Indian scouts, mostly Warm Springs Apaches, under the leadership of Archie McIntosh. McIntosh was a half blood Boise who had been raised at a Hudson Bay trading post.

A correspondent was also along. He was Joe Wasson of the Owyhee Avalanche, a newspaper published in Silver City, Idaho. Wasson later became the state senator from Mono County and still later was a U.S. consul in Mexico.

Also included in the party was Dad Wilson, a stagecoach driver who laid claim to being the best Indian fighter in the west.

Traveling by night they reached a point a few miles from the Indians. When they made camp both the men and the scouts were almost exhausted and Crook did not want to send out McIntosh or any of the Warm Springs braves to locate the enemy. Wilson, who joined late, volunteered and against his better judgement Crook allowed him to go.

He found the Modocs all right and then he panicked. He built a fire that could be seen for twenty miles and fled back to the main body. The opposition quickly melted away into the mountains.

Crook's men, soldiers, packers and scouts, were so angry and disgusted that they threw a rope over a tree and were about to lynch Wilson when Lt. Erskine happened along and saved him.

With the element of surprise now lost the army began to follow the foe by daylight and on the third day McIntosh reported he had located them on the south Fork of the Pit River.

They had entered a break in the 1000-foot high river bluff and had entrenched themselves in a natural fortress. Before them lay an incline of lava rocks, many weighing tons; to the east and west were high, balcony like promontories on which some of the braves took posi-

tion. Behind them the wall of the crater rose for some 300 feet. It was estimated that there were over 100 defenders led by a shaman, or medicine man, named Si-e-ta.

Parnell and the 1st Cavalry moved to the attack on the west side; Madigan and the 23rd Infantry assailed the east side while the scouts and the rest of the attackers approached from the front. This latter party reached their positions at about 1 p.m. in the afternoon, or at about the same time that Madigan's men gained the heights assigned to them. They mistook the scouts for the enemy and opened fire on them. Fortunately there were no casualties but the air was some what discolored by profanity before the error was rectified. Parnell lost two men and had two wounded while moving into his position.

Heavy fighting then continued until dark at which time Crook ordered his men to hold their positions to prevent an escape by the enemy and to avoid a mixup in fighting between his own forces.

Wasson remained with the troops and reported the night was made hideous by the war dance of the besieged, and further spiced by a thunder and lightening storm.

The next morning Crook told his men their only hope was a frontal attack and he wanted them to charge and keep going until they had reached their objective.

Lieutenant Madigan had had a premonition of death the night before and was wounded during the initial charge. He continued to lead his men and was shot dead within twenty paces. The army suffered other casualties of six soldiers and one civilian packer.

Boosting one another up the steep climb, and across a volcanic fissure, they finally reached the rim of the fortress. Sergeant Michael Meara, now in command, shouted "Come on, boys, we got 'em", and then he was shot dead. Sgt. David Russler took command and was almost immediately wounded.

The fire slackened and died as the troops charged into the bowl of the defense but their victory was short lived. They found only two dead Indians. The defenders had slipped away through crevices into caverns below.

All day the troopers poured a withering fire into the caves but no sound was heard except for the cries of women and children. At last Crook allowed a squaw to come into camp and learned from her that the warriors had crept through an underground passage beneath his very feet and were now miles away. Inspection of the cave turned up 16 dead braves and cost the life of another soldier who was shot by a badly wounded Indian.

Thus ended the "Three Day Battle of this Indian Gibralter", as Wasson entitled it. The army called it the "Battle of the Infernal Caverns."

The dead troopers were buried on the bank of the main stream of the Pit River and horses marched back and forth to obliterate traces of the graves. This proved futile for when a detachment came back to remove the bodies to a military cemetary it was discovered that they had been dug up and mutiliated.

The wounded were carried in stretchers, slung between mules, to Camp Warner, 150 miles away.

This expedition cost Crook seven dead and ten wounded but he was able to capture a large supply of guns, ammunition and foodstuffs.

An ironic note was added when they returned to camp. There was an order stating that Lt. Madigan had been approved for promotion and transfer.

## Chapter 9

# General Crook's Campaign

**The actual account of the expedition as written by Joe Wasson**

On the 3rd of September I sent you a batch of matter for swearing at from "Camp No. 3, of the Goose Lake Campaign - said camp in Camas Prahins on the Drew Road east of the north end of the Lake. All the scouts were employed in determining the destination of the abundant "sign" that is

"Whether the Snake that made the track was going north or coming back."

Darragh and scouts had been sent north to the Abert Lake country, McIntosh and McKay's to the mountains west of Goose Lake. During the night of the 4th the main command left the prarie, came out through a canyon to the northwest seven miles to Goose Lake Valley, crossed over to the mountains west and camped in the timbered valley of Kelly's Creek. Twenty miles altogether of this eight's march. The 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th were passed by the Command at this camp. On the morning of the 5th, Archy and McKay came in with four scalps, and reported the probable whereabouts of others, and on the 8th started for the place and a two days' scout. Went along, but saw nothing except fine mountain scenery and considerable game. On the 9th, the command moved up the

creek fifteen miles where we found it encamped and Darragh returned. He had tailed a party of Indians into the tules round the Abert Lakes, and after figuring around two or three days, had to abandon the hunt. He found two respectable sized lakes in addition to what are noted on the map. On the 10th, the entire command marched together northwest through the mountains--passing through a beautiful valley six miles in length, with as fine a stream of water running through it into Abert Lake as I ever saw; swarming with brook trout. "McKay Valley" may be known by two rocky buttes in the center. On the 11th, a short march (six miles) north--Indian sign and fresh in the vicinity. Seemed to tend to the southeast. A part of Darragh's Indians sent that way with several days rations. The balance of the command (on the 12th) struck off to the southwest, through the mountains, twelve miles, and camped high up on the nice stream aforesaid The General had become satisfied, by this time that the Indians he had "lost" had gone south, but concluded to split the command and go in the opposite directions.

On the morning of the 13th, Major Perry, with Co. F., 1st Cavalry; Captain Harris, with Co. M, same regiment, and Captain Darragh and McKay, with their respective companies of scouts, were sent north, Perry, commanding, with orders to scout the country across from Summer and Silver lakes to the head of Deschutes river, via Crooked river, and bring up at Camp Harney, sixty miles south of Canyon City, General Crook, with the smaller part of the expedition, consisting of Co. H, 1st Cavalry, and Co. D 23rd infantry, (mounted) the former commanded by Lieut. W.R. Parnell, the Latter (temporarily) by Lieut. John Madigan, and Archy McIntosh with his 'Snakes' started south. The General remarked that if his venture on the Southern tour failed to in any way meet public expectations, the blame should fall upon him along. He put little faith in a summer campaign, but believed this one necessary. Ten miles march south through the mountains, and camped on a branch of Sprague river, which helps to make the Klamath lakes.

On the 16th, marched southwest through the mountains, recrossed the divide -- from which a good view of the Modock mountains to the west was had – and camped southwest of Drew valley, through which West End creek runs into the north end of Goose lake. Fifteen miles today.

The 17th, marched southeast twelve miles through nice mountain country. passing a beautifully located lake on which wild fowl were abundant.

On the 18th, marched southeast through high level timber land, fifteen miles; camped in a canyon next to Goose lake, opposite to Lassen Pass, in the Warner range. Saw dozens of deer and antelope today, and the Indians manage to keep their commissary full of that sort of rations. Command remained in camp here during the 19th and 20th, for the purpose of recruiting the stock a little.

A paragraph in regard to the country passed over. All the maps yet in vogue are nothing like correct, respecting that part of Oregon west of the Owyhee to the Klamath and Deschuttes country and north of the Warner and Goose Lakes. There is fifteen miles square of good bunch grass prairie between the north end of Goose Lake and the Mountains north and west, which are high, sharp, thickly timbered ridges, interspersed with small lakes, camas prairies, patches of pea vine, broad grassy ravines. Pitch, sugar and white pine, white and dark fir, cedar, juniper and cottonwood, etc. constitute the varieties of timber. On the foot hills and

in the canyons north of the lake. Wild plums are abundant, elderberries abound and nearly every stream in the aforesaid mountains is prolific in brook trout. No indications of the precious metals, and if there are any who "at distance hear

The roaring floods and
cataracts that sweep
From disemboweled earth
the virgin gold"--

in the region outlined, they had better make the most of the entertainment that "distance" lends in this case and try their luck elsewhere.

On the 21st, command marched through the juniper and lava about eight miles to a canyon near the south end of the lake. The lake is about forty miles in length and will average about ten miles in width; it is almost an uninterrupted sheet of water, and along the western shore - rocky or gravelly, with the waves lashing thereupon, it seems more like a lake than anything in the "District of the Lakes". The water has a sort of milky color that I have not heard explained. On the 22nd, marched fifteen miles south over the plain to springs. Here "the trouble" commenced. Archy with some of his Indians were sent ahead in the evening to look for "sign," and Wilson was entrusted with six Indians to go in a southwest direction for the same purpose -- and to join Archy in the night. This was the second time only during the summer that Wilson was allowed to go on a responsible errand -- the General don't want any stock in a person who is always talking of how many "year" he has "fit" Indians, and of taking "sculps" as if 'twere as easily done as said. Good horseflesh was above par about this time, and for the reason that Wilson possessed a couple of good animals he was deemed a necessary evil on this part of the expedition. About nine o'clock at night, the old fellow discovered all his know ledge of scouting and put his natives on the lookout, by building a large fire on an exposed point in view of the camp of the soldiers -- said fire being answered soon after on the Warner Range, twenty-five miles east. If this affair caused uneasiness at headquarters, it were nothing to what followed the next day, the 23rd, when the command marched south for several miles and camped on Pitt River. At the crossing of the Forts Crook and Bidwell road, two Indian boys were captured and brought along. About noon old Wilson came puffing and sweating in to headquarters, with the story that early that morning he "fit" a camp of at least "fifty" warrior" (ten miles west), and that his Indian scouts had run, etc. By this time seven or eight signal fires were in active operation ten miles down the river. When the General asked Wilson why he had not reported (as so strictly enjoined) instead of alarming the camp discovered in the morning -- the poor old fool stammered out something about wanting to find Archy, &c., &c., and went off with his head down like a sheep. After marching the command for two weeks over the most infernal ground, for the purpose of keeping under cover, and it had been quietly landed within one night's march of its destination, and now that the whole campaign seemed to be rendered a complete failure, the disgust around headquarters was the most intense I had ever seen. The scouts that should have run away &c., came in toward evening as leisurely as if nothing had happened; and the fact is, they don't demoralize so easily as white men, being much better judges in such cases of when danger is real or imaginary. The old man, it was plain, had fired a few shots promiscuously and broke like a quarter-horse for the main command. Archy and party came in soon after with the scalp and gun of a

buck whom they caught near the signal fires down the valley. Pitt River (which name originated in the fact that the Indians used to trap the deer, etc., by means of deep pits) in a stream the color of Goose Lake, is about fifty feet wide and three in depth at this time, and runs through a wide rye-grass-sage-brush-alkali valley; north of the valley and west of the lake (in California which claims two-thirds of it) is a high rocky plain, thickly timbered with juniper and extended off as far as the eye can reach towards Mount Shasta and the Klamath country. On the 24th, considering that the hostile natives were well armed, the General marched the command down the wagon road in daylight about twenty miles and within that distance of Fort Crook, as if he were enroute to Sacramento: and where the mountains came up to the river on the southside, crossed over and camped in a timbered canyon. Here, he having become satisfied that the two captives belonged at Fort Crook and had been following a detachment of soldiers up the road towards Bidwell on a begging tour, they were started on their way down stream rejoicing. On the 25th, started southeast along the foot of a timbered spur of mountain. While going up one side of a rough canyon, a wikiup of Indians were jumped up on the opposite--the several bucks scattered and hid; the squaws and papposes were not molested--"the state of the country" already such that their capture would make little difference one way or the other. Struck a much used Indian trail which tended toward the head of the South Fork of Pit River--fresh moccasin tracks, thick and sticky were seen. Camped in a timbered canyon; a hard fifteen miles' march; good bunch-grazing everywhere since crossing the river, and fine creeks. If I had seen huge disgust and chagrin round headquarters of the District of the Lakes three days ago, the cup of indignation was more than full tonight, and to add to the gloom the clouds were black and raining. The General was off by himself under a big pine, roasting the pods, trying to whittle and whistle and had a face on longer than this report with two veto messages added. He considered the campaign "all up;" Archy's horses were about on their last legs for scouting, all the stock weary and much of it sick; the country alive with hostile Indians on the alert, and whether scattered or concentrated or both as yet undetermined by "the party of the first part."

On Thursday, September 26th, the command moved eastward along the Indian trail aforesaid several miles over high table land; fresh horse tracks, as if there had been much galloping back and forth during the night, and moccasin tracks as usual. Arrived at a small lake, the "sign" seemed to scatter but the general direction northeast. Arch and several of his "boys" traced the indications ahead and the command marched southeast to the lava bluffs overlooking the South Fork of Pitt River, two miles down a canyon -- twelve in all from last camp -- and the valley was reached. Turned north along foot of bluffs, and when about five miles north of the place Williamson's Map calls "Camp F.S. Meadows," Archy came galloping off the high bluffs with the word that he had tracked Indians into the rocks, but could only guess at the number. The command was within half a mile of the south line of the occupied rocks. The General ordered Parnell to dismount half of his men and take them up and form a line across this side; Madigan to move further on and act on the same order with regard to the north side -- under the circumstances the Indian would hardly try to escape to the plain below. Archy had got the remainder of his "boys" and returned to the high bluffs. I went

along with him, satisfied that a good view of the performance could be obtained up there. We got up through a canyon on the south side and round to the brink of the bluffs about one o'clock, and just as Madigan's men got in line; not understanding the disposition of troops as yet, his men gave us a valley of Springfield rifle balls -- no one hurt. Some blasphemous remarks (in the American language) in return fixed the matter. The "boys" got into position Indian style, and as I was taking an opera-glass view of the "menagerie" beneath, a couple of slugs from the "inside" sounded as though a similar position would be acceptable. I got a place that seemed to be tolerably comfortable, and a birds-eye view of the enemy's works appeared in outline as follows: A perpendicular lava wall three hundred feet high and a third of a mile in length forms the west side; on the north, running down towards the valley, is a ridge of great lava boulders; on the south a canyon; from the valley, it is a gradual rise (coming west) till within about four hundred yards of the high wall, where it forms a low sharp ridge with loose boulders along the crest -- this forming the eastern side, and giving the whole a basin-like appearance. Running into this basin from the southeast side are two promontories of rock one hundred and fifty feet in length, fifty wide and thirty high, and wall perpendicular; the two points are parallel with each other and thirty feet apart -- thus making an impassable gorge between. On the north end of the eastern point is a circular artificial fort twenty feet in diameter breast high with port-holes; on the western point are two of the aforesaid forts on a larger scale. Between the forts and the bluff, the canyon on the south and ridge on the north, it is a mass of shapeless lava, boulders from the size of an A tent up.

The Indians well knew the value of position, for the only practicable approach is from the eastern slope, and they seemed to make the fort next it their headquarters at this time -- 2 P.M. When Parnell approached the canyon from the south, he got a volley from fifteen or twenty Indians, who then fell back into the forts -- making defiant gestures and exclamations. Parnell's men were then enabled to get a position within fifty yards of the forts under the rocky crest, but in attempting to reconnoitre in advance of this, a volley from the fort mortally wounded Sergeant Barchet, killed private Lyons and wounded privates Clancy and Fisher. This repulse, which we could plainly see from above, was noticed by Eskridge-in charge of the stock, herders, &c., on the plain below -- who went into camp. A regular siege was inevitable. All hands "round the circle," from the time they got position and a lay of the land, poured a constant stream of bullets into and round the the forts, and with the sound of the firing, mashing and glancing of balls and the yelling from both sides -- the occasion was interesting, to say the least.

The General was busy reconnoitering the enemy's works below - getting a "close call" occasionally - until about 5 P.M., and had sent a squad of Parnell's men up to join Archy, and after being persuaded that it was improper to shoot us from the rear, they helped throw lead down on the forts. One Indian made his escape by way of the ridge and bluffs to our left, thinking it one of Madigan's men, the slippery cuss got too much the start; as he gained the level he made some saucy gestures, gave a whoop and ran for a lava canyon north. Archy gave him a good chase, however. Madigan, while attempting a close inspection of the forts, got a slight wound in the right arm. From the bluff line down to the forts, the range was about

400 yards at an angle of 45 degrees, yet the east fort would make it warm for a person venturing but a momentary exposure of head and shoulders. Hundreds of shots from the bluff must have struck inside the forts during the afternoon, while below from the three sides there was a volley in readiness for every Indian that showed himself. All the bucks that were seen up to this time wore a very simple dress -- naked to the waist, a short shirt and head stuck full of feathers. About a dozen horses were hidden in the gorge between the rocky promontories. Two good animals were allowed to pass through our lines. The General came up above for a final observation, ordered Archy's command to supper and the soldiers to watch the bluffs till further orders. Parnell (executive officer) was ordered to see that the soldiers got their regular rations and a strong picket kept up. About dark all the available men were ordered to crawl up as near the fort as possible and prevent any escapes -- Archy's men to occupy the ridge below, between the soldiers -- the latter to connect their lines west of the forts, but under the high wall. The loose boulders along the crest of the ridge made good breastworks for the 'boys' and they crawled up to within one hundred feet of the east fort and about on the level with the same. Soon as darkness set in, the besieged devils turned loose with their Piute tooth-picks (arrows) and what with those and throwing stones we had no occasion to go to sleep. The bodies of Barchet and Lyons were recovered from the rocks early in the night, and one of Madigan's men, Carl Bross, killed accidentally; he had crawled too far ahead, and the soldiers couldn't distinguish in the dark so well as Archy's "Boys" perhaps. Some more of the horses attempted to come out, when their "proprietors" called them back with arrow. In and around the forts there was constant sound of the rolling down or piling up of rocks -- as if they were building additional breastwords; and every time the pickets would fire a volley, that interesting "talk" was heard, sounding at times as if it proceeded from a cavern. Till midnight, thunder and lightning added a peculiar interest to the scene; vivid flashes of the latter lending an infernal coloring to the black basin and wall to the west. "The clouds that lowered upon our house" were ominous, but I had got an inkling at supper time of what was yet to come. In the first place, the General said the siege should be continued from day to day until the red devils were all killed or starved to death -- provided it could be done with the means at hand; secondly, (considering that it had become a chronic thing for soldiers to follow Indians into rocks and leave them) the moral effect of such an affair would be worth several ordinary victories. And lastly, the taking of all these artificial forts by storm, would heighten the effect and shorten the siege -- besides saving the men, as the latter would then have additional advantage with less exposure.

He was up from camp about daylight, and after hearing the reports, ordered Parnell and Madigan to bring all the available men they had on picket duty, and from under the crest facing the east fort. They had each about twenty men. Archy and "boys" was sent around to get positions on the opposite side of the rocks of the ridge. The storming parties (Madigan on the left) was ordered to crawl up the slope as far as possible without discovering themselves, and halt. Obe Lawrence Traynor (citizen) took Lyons carbine, and he and I volunteered to go in with the "boys in blue" -- it was "our funeral" -- and we joined Madigan's right. The General talked to the men like "a father" told them at the work "Forward" they

should rise up quick, go with a yell and keep yelling and never think of stopping until they had crossed the ditch, scaled the wall and broke through the breastworks, and the faster the better. About sunup (of the 27th) the word was given. We had gone about twenty feet when a volley of all sorts of slugs and arrows had knocked eight of Madigan's men out of time -- killing the Lieutenant himself, badly wounding - Corporals McCann, Fogarty and Firman and privates McGuinty and Barbee -- the two latter with arrows -- and badly wounding Traynor. The remainder of the boys kept going, a canyon or natural ditch, wide and deep to cross notwithstanding. There were but two points along the wall that seemed an impossibility to climb; Sargeant Russler (Co. D) in the east fort, received a wound in the right temple. The shot came from the west fort through a port-hole at which the man was stationed. He had got hold of that fatal carbine of Lyons. It was significant of the preference for breech loaders to see the infantrymen exchange their guns as fast as the Spencers became idle. The picket guard and firing were kept up stronger than ever -- if possible -- during the afternoon and night of the 27th; and after the manner of a free fight -- whenever you see a head "hit it." The curious quiet of the afternoon on the part of the enemy, was rendered more singularly by squaling of pappouses during the night -- which was very dark -- in front and rear of the men. The morning of the 28th developed the tactics adopted by the savages soon after the storming and successfully acted upon during the night. About 8 A.M. a young squaw was allowed to come out through the lines and her story was that all the men had escaped during the night--leaving nothing but squaws and pappouses. Archy's men searched "round the circle" and found that this story was but too true. Running from the fortified promontories to the southwest and the canyon, is a deep strata of lava threaded with fissures and subterranean passages, and, the pickets having crawled in close to the forts, the slippery devils wormed out under the feet of the men many rods to the rear into the canyon and over the bluffs. Beyond the canyon, in their flight, guns, bows and arrows, ammunition &c., were dropped showing a state of demoralization never anticipated by the saucy fiends two days before. After the fact of their escape being fully established, all hands went into an examination of the premises -- every man venturing according to the extent of his fearless curiosity. Thus far I have only attempted a discription of what appeared on the surface. To begin with those promontories and surroundings constitute a most remarkable fortress of natural engineering and the sagacity of the Indians in selecting it is only equalled by their ingenuity in completing its defensive character in the building of those birdnest bastions and guarding every approach and parapet with breastworks of suitable demensions; there are natural shelves, fissures and caverns in ten acres inclusive and surrounding, that -- thoroughly known -- ten thoumen could be stowed out of sight in ten minutes; and five hundred men, unacquainted with the place, could never capture five well posted, armed and supplied to stand a siege within. Regular hatchway holes run down through from the artificial forts, many of which are worn smooth from the climbing up and down to and from the subterranean resorts. In scaling the walls and overrunning the rocky promontories, the fissures facing and under foot are every few steps, and of such depth that a man can be shot within three feet of him and never know what did it. That the place is an old (but lately active) volcano, is probable. To thoroughly

explore these caverns, containing wounded and armed savages, who know all the exits and entrances and possess all the advantages of light and darkness, was too much to demand of the officers and men who had acted so well from the first, and the General permitted everyone to use his own discretion in the matter. Lieut. Parnell acted very earnestly and bravely from first to last. In the ditch or gorge is an entrance to a cave under the east fort; about eleven o'clock, Jas. Carey, of Co. H, started down into the dark den head foremost and sixshooter in hand. He reached a shelf with a bullet through his heart. In recovering the body, one of the men said he got sight of a cave in which 'you could camp the command.' The bulk of the volleys came from in and around this gorge – the artificial forts being used as it were for sharp shooters, about a dozen of whom occupied the east fort and seemed to be reserving their fire, as they waited until we got up to the port holes, then firing and leaving their guns. It was not ascertained whether any natural supply of drinking water existed in these caves. The only indication of an economical use of ammunition was discovered in the east fort; they had stacked up the battered balls, thrown in from the bluffs the first day, and sent some of them back at us the next morning. Plenty of powder and caps, bows and arrows, were found in and around the forts -- some of the former in sacks, considerable in almost brand new Japanese cans and boxes. The guns were mostly of the American half-stock pattern, showing a source of supply. The great number and depth of the caves rendering the idea of burning and smoking the occupants futile; if anything were lacking to complete their demoralization, hand grenades or shells to roll down the openings would have done the work - and what a pleasure it would have been to those on the outside; the hammering of all the artillery extant could not have dislodged the occupants, had they decided to remain. But they had no idea of the soldiers staying with them right along, and the cause of their sudden change of tactics was now apparent. Whether they will ever make another stand in such a place -- not knowing what to expect, and they won't if Crook goes down there again on "business" -- remains to be seen. I heard no man complain of the charge, etc., but rather that the whole siege was conducted and finished on the cheapest plan; and there was a universal feeling of regret that the savages knew all about the rocks and we didn't. The largest estimate of their dead claimed by the men, was but fifteen, and yet the wonder was that even that number were killed. Five dead bucks were found in one hole – the bodies partly covered with rocks. The number of dead (if any) in the unexplored caves, is not ascertained. The east fort was a bloody affair, and the wall down the gorge in the in the rear was streaked with the article. An old one-eyed crop-haired squaw, whom the command gave bread back at the wickiup, was found dead in the rocks, and added to the claim, "Cast thy bread upon the waters." About noon, while Archy and the "boys" were crawling around the forts, he fired at what seemed to be a moving shadow in a deep shelf of rock, and killed a squaw, The scouts remained around the place till dark, but nothing new developed except that "Boise Jimmy" found the corpse of a chief that was at the head of of stealing H Co's horses last winter. The "boys" have got the fur cap taken off unnamed Chinese and the scalp it covered. There were only eight horses saved -- several fine ones, others much jaded.

When Gen. Crook came to Idaho last winter, he set about whipping

the Indians and learning their haunts, with an energy unparalleled -- with much success and some vexatious loss. He soon became satisfied that from the impudent character of the depredations on the Humboldt road and the Owybee settlements, that the perpetrators had some far off place of retreat and where they lived in apparent innocence. From experience he concluded that Indians seldom go less than one hundred miles to commit deviltry, and oftener two or three; that they are never peaceable from principal, and their best policy is to have a portion of the tribe "peaceable" and the remainder hostile; that the overwhelming Washoe settlements overawed the Piutes, when they turned their attention north to Humboldt and Owybee, and have had the Goose and Eagle lake and Pitt river country all to themselves for a quiet shelter – a warm climate and rich in their kind of vegetables, which they must have, and it is folly to suppose they live round on cold rocks and horsemeat along; that it is the "Piutes" instead of the "Snakes" that are doing the bulk of the deviltry, and it is well known that the "Piutes" ground extended to Owybee. Of course, there is more or less intercourse between all the tribes or remnants mentioned, and the General is satisfied, from information gained this summer, that there is a fine trade going on between the Nez Perces and Indians on the Malheur and Burnt river; but that the greater portion of the Snakes were crowded east by the big emigration to Boise, and were well settled through the influence of Gen. O'Conner. That there is something of a general understanding, is indicated from another source -- by some of Archy's Piute captives from the Truckee Reservation, who occasionally forget themselves and talk as good Chinook Jargon as the more highly educated citizens of Oregon.

Gen. Crook was determined to make the aforesaid campaign this summer, cost what it would, and demonstrate to the authorities and public interested, certain disputed facts. He took a broad view of the matter, and this campaign should satisfy the most incredulous of the correctness thereof. And if there were no large bands of well armed and mounted savages circusing along the Owybee this summer, as of old, it is evidence of the good disposition of the troops. The General will take a pleasure in fighting those devils this winter, if he can get the reasonable means he asks for at Camp Warner.

Regarding the history of the men killed, this was learned -- of Co. H, 1st Cav.; Charles Barchet, German, through the war with 7th Vermont Volunteers, has relatives in Texas; Jas. Lyons, father and brother living in Place Dale, Rhode Island; Michael Mears, born in Galway, Ireland, has been in the U.S. Army eighteen years, relatives in Boston, Mass.; Willoughby Sawyer, native of Canada West; Jas. Carey, for a long time resident of New Orleans. Of Co. D, 23rd Infantry: Carl Bross, German, family in Newark, New Jersey.

These men were buried on the river flat north of where the fight occured about one mile. Buried in separate graves, side by side, the earth tramped in, the surplus dirt removed, and the whole burned over after the manner of a log-heap. Bad enough to be killed by savages, but there is additional horror attendant in knowing that one has to be left hundreds of miles in the wilderness, without so much as a little lumber to designate the line of demarkation between human and mother earth; but on the other hand, the greatest respect that can be afforded, is to have every trace obliterated. The well known practices of the human hyenas that inhabit the country, render this sort of ceremony a necessity.

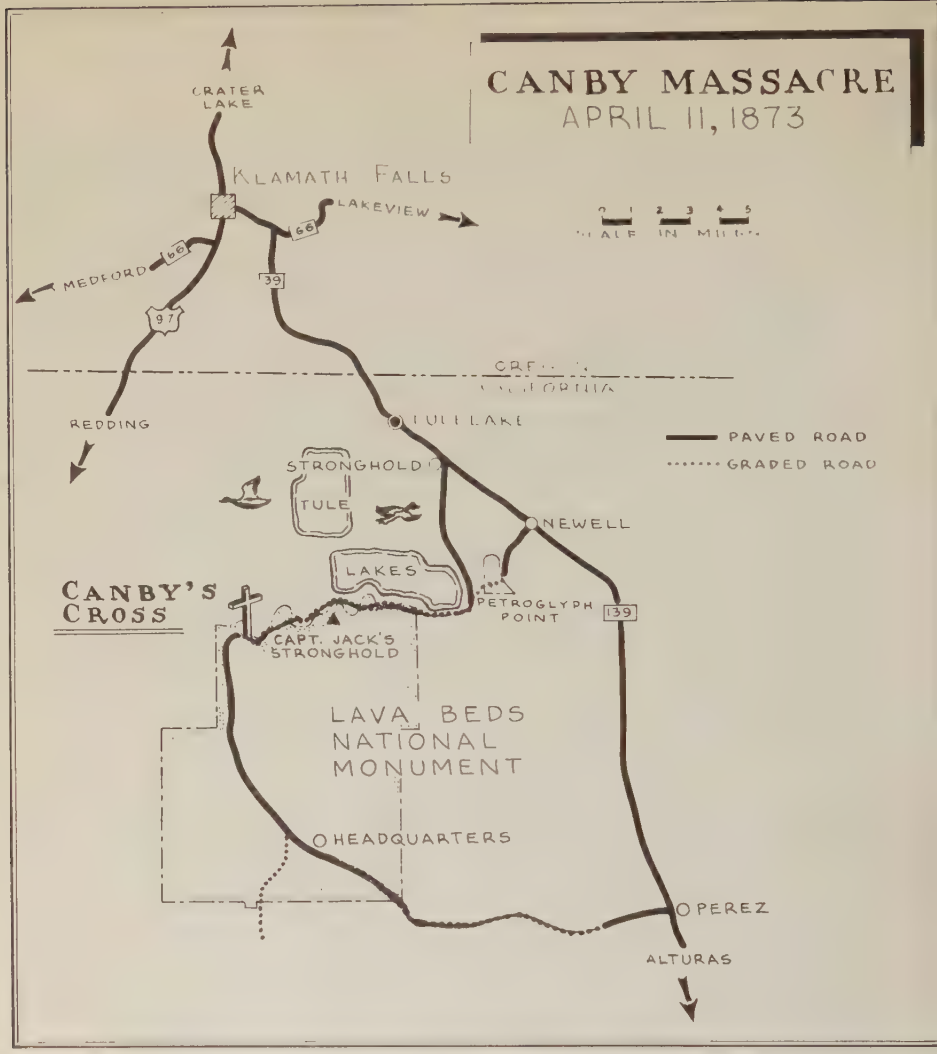
The unfortunate officer -- Madigan,

it was resolved to take along one day's march from the battlefield. The wounded (unable to ride horseback) were placed on two-mule litters, and on the 29th the command marched north along the west bank of the South Fork -- curious stream; clear as crystal, solid bottom, but tule shores make it impassable -- get in one side and you can't get out the other. Fifteen miles to the main stream which is bad enough, and a crossing was effected. The South Fork Valley is at least fifteen miles wide by thirty long -- or much longer for anything I know.

There is doubtless much rich land available on either side -- on the west along the bluffs, on the east the Warner Range; numerous creeks and rivulets. The South Fork is a great resort for fishing -- by the Indians. About twenty rods north of the main stream and thirty below the junction of South Fork, Lieutenant John Madigan (of Co. H, 1st .Cav.) was buried with extra ceremony -- of the kind. He was born and brought up in Jersey City, N.J., served through the war with the army of the Potomac, and for gallantry therein received a commission in the regular service. His friendship was of the genuine sort, and , possessing a drollorigin-ality and humor, his presence at the camp-fire had become almost in-dispensable with Crook's officers, and no one could more regret his taking off in the prime of life than the General himself. Alas! poor Madigan! where are your oddities now? Hushed amid the yells of fiends, and no sound but the bugle call of judgment can awaken you to glory again. Madigan was shot through the left temple -- tearing a hole through his head an inch in diameter, and of course never knew what hurt him. He fell about where Lyons was killed the first day -- also shot through the head.

On the 30th, the command marched up the west bank of Pitt river several miles, crossed to the east bank where is a most singular collection of soft sand cones, not unlike in-verted hornets' nests and about the same color; they are from forty to fifty feet high and stand round over several acres in pairs and threes-- an old one with one or two young ones as it were; and if that isn't a graphic description I don't want a cent. A few miles north and camped. Only ten miles today. Scouts kept in the rear for the purpose of get-ting in a backhanded lick on some of the lurking natives, but such satis-faction was barely probable. The mineralogical corps found a fair prospect of gold in the creek here, and Warner range east, round Saddle Mountain looks like a gold country. On the 1st of October, north fifteen miles and camped the Lassen Pass. Passed where large signal fires had been made in answer to those down the river and followed by others near the rocks -- showing a perfect system of telegraphy -- of the kind. The source of Pitt river had been a source of dispute with many so long - the General concluded to make a detour from the command and follow the stream up towards Goose Lake. It was found to run out of said lake, and for ten miles next to the lake was a stream apparently larger than below the forks. Great numbers of ducks, but why such a nice lake should have such a "goose" of a name, did not appear. And why Wil-liams' Map, which is very correct regarding the shape of the lake, its sources and the Warner Range and the Pitt river country generally, should not have the outlet of the lake right, is unaccountable -- unless it is a sample of State prejudice, and he didn't want the waters of the Sacramento contaminated by goose-dabblings from as far north in Web-foot as Jacksonville or "Long Tom." Now, that I have nothing to say on

the "Route Question," the Oregonians are welcome to this; and by the way, advise them to look round and see if Williamson has not hoodwinked several thousand feet off that favorite "permenent peak" of theirs. Found bunches of plump, ripe wheat and oats at the wagon-road crossing several miles below the lake; think there is much land down there that will pay for surveying. The temperature is favorably shown up by the freshness of the bunchgrass and other vegatation. On the 2nd, marched fifteen miles north along the west base ot the Warner range to near the Oregon line. Next day same distance to north end of lake. Passed near North End Mountain on which Archy "fit" with Che-oh & Co. It is a high and rocky make up, surely, and is one of the fortified stations on the Piute route to Idaho. The wild plums were found to be ripe, and to say they were worth going for and we went, is no name for it. Counting the prairie north of the lake, and there is a range of most superb bunchgrass grazing land along the Warner Range, and in extent at least fifteen miles wide by one hundred in length. The Warner range is very high, broad, bald and rugged, timbered ravines with fine creeks every few miles, fish and game abundant. Altogether a superior section of interior public domain. That fair paying mines will be found and the reclaiming of the country follow and soon, is a reasonable conslusion. From the Drew road, the command continued north over a low divide to the valley of Abert Lake, fifteen miles -- the 4th. Six or eight miles over high bluffs to the east, and Camp Wood -- (new) Camp Warner was reached again. The soldiers were truly glad to see a chance to rest -- especially the wounded, who seemed to get along finely. Lt. Powell, regular surgeon, had arrived and is there assigned. Among the letters waiting for Madigan was a promotion. Lieutenant Small's re-reported success -- killing and capturing thirty Indians -- in the tules of Abert Lakes, agree in time and circumstances so well, that I think Capt. Darragh helped him to that "bowl of blood". The news came up via Bidwell that the two Winnemucas had lately come into Susanville, with passes from the Truckee Reservation to go "hunting" in the Eagle Lake section -- good "sign" and that , is a muddle wherein the citizens were going to kill them. They got away. On the 7th, Thos. Dean and party came into Warner from Ft. Crook. He had two pulls at it -- being driven back once by the Indians. He was attacked on the morning the fight commenced, but near where the command first struck Pitt river. Nothing like having the natives show their hand "where they live."




--photo courtesy National Park Service

**Catacombs Cave, an excellent example of a lava tube**
--photo courtesy National Park Service

**The battle site at Overlook**

--photo courtesy National Park Service

**An old Stone corral on the high desert**

--photo courtesy National Park Service

Graves of Captain Jack and other Indians who were hanged.

**Canby's Cross marks place where he was murdered**

—photo courtesy National Park Service

**Army encampment near Stronghold**

--photos courtesy Modoc County Museum

## Chapter 10

# Lava Beds National Monument

Lava Beds National Monument is located in extreme northern central California in Siskiyou and Modoc counties. The northern boundary is twelve miles south of the Oregon state line. The monument covers 46,238.69 acres.

The area was set aside in 1925 by presidential proclamation to create the Lava Beds National Monument. The United States Forest Service administered the area as a part of Modoc National Forest until 1933 when the National Park Service assumed responsibility. During the later 1920's roads, stairways, and cave trails were started to make this unique area available to the public.

The earliest human history of the monument is in the petroglyphs or carved symbols and in the pictographs or painted symbols. These apparently existed before white men recorded trips to the west as the Indians encountered in these trips made no mention of these paintings and carvings in their folklore.

The old Fort Hall Trail and parts of the Oregon Trail wound their way around the northern section of the Lava Beds. When Kit Carson and John Fremont visited the area it was known as the "Dark and Bloody Ground of the Pacific" as emigrants were extremely exposed to Indian attack here.

The most significant historical event in the monument was the Modoc Indian War of 1872-1873. This war was the only major Indian engagement in California and has the dubious distinction of being the only Indian war in which an United States Army general (General E.R.S. Canby, the peace commissioner) was killed.

The first cave discovered by white men in the area received its name from bear paws nailed on an old ponderosa pine. Trappers work-

ing the area in the early 1880's killed a bear in their camp near a large butte. This butte was named Bear Paw, and the two nearby caves Little Bear Paw and Big Bear Paw. Years later the settlers remember seeing the bear paws nailed on the pine tree. In the later 1880's nearby settlers ranged cattle and sheep over the country and utilized the only available water which was found within the caves.

About this time the valley settlers started using the area as a picnic ground. They would load up their wagons with youngsters and the makings for ice cream and stop at the Bear Paw Ice Caves. Ice chipped from the cave deposits made the ice cream. No one worried about the cause and preservation of the huge ice pendents. They were just something to give off a musical tingle as the picnickers tossed rocks.

By the 1890's several men had settled in the Lava Beds area. Ernest Heppe, a remittance man from England, set up his camp near the southwest corner of the present day monument. His name was given to Heppes Cave and Heppe Lava Chimney located near his camp. Birds and other wild animals drink from the crystal-clear pool of water below the natural arch in Heppes Cave. The ice beneath the water is solid the year round.

To the east, near Calwells Butte, is the tumbled-down cabin of Calwell, an early sheep man. To the south of his cabin is Calwells Ice Cave. At one time he supplied his sheep troughs with water from the caves.

Early visitors named many of the caves from first impressions. One man in particular, J. D. Howard of Klamath Falls, Oregon, became interested and would spend days and weeks walking from one rift to another in search of caves. Seeing a bobcat run into an entrance, he named that cave Wildcat; another had an inclined entrance, so he called it Incline Cave. He had a great deal to do with marking and measuring the caves. He and several others first mapped Catacombs, a cave well-named because of its similarity in complexity to the Catacombs of Rome.

Of the 293 caves known to exist in the Monument, approximately 190 have been explored. When winter temperatures fall below zero, lava cracks, collapsed trenches, and even innocent-looking rock piles "smoke" and steam and from the condensation of warm air emerging from the caves. During Civilian Conservation Corps days, one man was assigned to drive up and down Monument roads or walk cross-country, exploring the "smokes" during subzero weather. Today his calling cards--small weathered lath sticks--are found throughout the area. Some of the caves will never be entered by man unless some hardy individual pulls away the entrance-blocking debris. Not all the Monument caves, however, have obstructed openings. The caves made available to the public today are generally entered through lava trenches which are collapsed portion of old lava tubes.

The monument is entirely covered with volcanic rocks. The Medicine Lake Highlands to the south are the center of the regional volcanic activity which started about thirty-five million years ago.

The oldest rock in the monument is the ryholitic-pumice tuffs (Lewis and Anderson 1936) with which the Indian petroglyphs are associated. These may be Early Tertiary (Swartzlow 1934).

The main flow which covers the monument is the Modoc Basalt Flow, Late Pleistocene or Early Recent in age. This flow originated in the Medicine Lake Highlands and has not been weathered or subjected to erosion in any degree. In texture this flow is fine granular to glassy, but is not obsidian. It is about half plagioclase feldspar and half pyroxene and basic glass. However, olivine is found in abundance, sometimes as high as twenty percent. Small amounts of iron oxide are common.

The olivine basalts along the fault scarp at the northwest end of the monument are Early Pleistocene or possibly Late Pliocene. These flows, which probably average over one hundred feet in total thickness, underlie much of the Modoc basalt flow.

To the northwest of the monument are a series of step faults in the olivine basalt. These extend into the monument and such volcanic structures as craters, cinder cones, and spatter cones or chimneys are apparently developed along extensions of these faults. The extreme northeastern corner of the monument is a horst cutting the tuffs. There are several other faults along the northern boundary of the monument which are associated with the graven that Tule Lake occupies immediately to the north of Lava Beds.

In Fossil Cave there are remains of camel and mastodon but unfortunately these cannot be of much help in determining the age of the Modoc basalt flow. The mastodon lived into modern times and the exact time of the camel's disappearance from this area has not been determined. Only a rough estimate of the age of the flow is possible; it is thought to be between twenty thousand and sixty thousand years old.

The oldest flow is the Juniper Butte flow, which is estimated to be up to 60,000 years. Later flows from Caldwell, Hippo, Schonchin, Mammoth Crater and Glass Mountain built up successive layers covering much of the older flows. The flows branched out from central sources; secondary flows developed where gas pressure or molten magma broke through contraction cracks in cooling lava to form large secondary (toy) fields. As a consequence many lava tubes cross at right angles on different levels. Cascades of lava in tubes may also reflect action of the secondary flows.

The youngest flows in the monument are perhaps five hundred years old. These are the Devils Homestead Flow in the northwestern part of the monument and the Black Flow (the largest lava flow in the monument) partly in the southwestern corner of Lava Beds. Black Flow has few caves; Devils Flow has many "miniature" caves, few of which have been explored. These flows support only scant vegetation in isolated pockets where pumice has collected. This pumice indicates that there has been volcanic activity since the flows. Indeed, Glass Mountain, a mass of obsidian about six miles south of the monument, is supposed to contain a steam vent on its northern slope.

## LAVA TUBES

There are about three hundred lava tubes or caves in the monument and most of them have several characteristics in common. The tubes are normally much longer than they are wide, are circular to oval in cross section, have low (up to ten feet high) ceilings, straight main passages, and the floors tilt along the general slope of the terrain.

The tubes were probably formed in the following manner. As the lava flowed out from the various cinder buttes and spatter cones it began to cool on the outer edges which soon solidified into rock. Beneath this confining crust the lava was still molten and fluid. The force of gravity and gas pressure pushed the fluid lava onward leaving a tube sealed at both ends.

Access to the tunnel was brought about by the collapse of the roof. In a few caves, such as Hercules Leg Cave, the entrances may have been blown out by gas pressure. Usually collapse formed two caves, one upgrade toward the source of lava and one downgrade, toward the end of the rift or trench. If the collapse occurred in two adjoining areas and the debris did not fill the tube, a natural bridge resulted. There are more than twenty such bridges, the best known being Symbol Bridge, which contains the Indian pictographs.

Cave floors exhibit a variety of shapes and forms. Since molten lava is a fluid, the flow encountered obstacles similar to those encountered by streams and rivers. Several caves, notably Valentine Cave, Golden Dome Cave, and Lava Brook Cave, exhibit such common stream features as rapids, falls, and eddy currents, well preserved in the basalt. This occurs mainly when the lava is highly fluid, swiftly moving, and is accompanied by rapid cooling.

Smooth floors, as in Catacombs Cave, have resulted from slowly cooling lava flows within the tubes. If, on the other hand, the flow was highly charged with gases, steam or water vapor, rough cinder-like floors, as in Silver Cave, are produced.

As the lava tubes, still filled with moving molten lava, began to drain, curious wall formations were left. Shelves were formed by rapid cooling of the lava as the flow "hesitated." If the flow was stationary for a long enough period, the entire surface hardened or "froze", forming a two level cave. Some caves, namely Crystal Cave, have several well-defined levels.

In places the hot gases above the lava remelted the ceiling and wall crusts, allowing them to drip and flow downward forming drip pendants (Fern Cave) or "lavacicles." Another feature, lava "coral", is found only in caves in which the crust that formed the ceiling is broken into shards or fragments. The coral forms by the deposition of calcite along the shards of basalt. The calcite is present in the ground water in the form of calcium carbonate probably originating in the weathering of plagioclase feldspars and the pyroxenes. Some of the deposits produce a branching effect which greatly resembles coral. The best displays of this coral are in White Lace Cave, Hercules Leg Cave, and Valentine Cave.

## ICE CAVES

About one hundred caves in the monument contain ice or water or both. The water is thought to be of meteoric origin which percolated downward through the porous basalt to the lower ends of the caves. If the lower ends of the caves are sealed to prevent seepage, a sufficient quantity may collect to form ice.

According to Harrington, the angle of the sun's rays is a fairly uniform factor in the formation of ice in caves. As the various ice caves in the monument face in all directions, this factor cannot be used in theory postulation of Lava Beds.

Another factor which does not hold is that air circulation through rock fissures is an important factor in the formation of ice. If air circulated through fissures in the summer, the ice would be warmed sufficiently to melt, in most cases probably totally. There is a minor amount of atmospheric circulation through rock fissures in a very few ice caves in the monument, but in the great majority there is no noticeable circulation.

The explanation of ice caves centers around the fact that there is active circulation of air in winter but comparatively little circulation in the summer months. The density of surface air increases in winter, and will tend to seek lower levels. This effectively pushes out the warm air that may be in these lower levels. This cycle repeats until the lower end of the cave is below the freezing point of water. Ice may then form from the water that has previously collected there or that seeps after the freezing temperature has been established.

During the hot summer months, the air is heated and expands, tending to rise in the atmosphere. As the colder air is lower in the lava tube, there is very little air circulation in the cave in the summer. A person may note the usually tremendous difference of air temperature when entering ice caves in the summer. This "buffer zone" is usually confined to the entrance and there may be as much as forty degrees of temperature change in a few vertical feet.

Another factor in ice caves formed in porous basalt is the dead air spaces in these basaltic rocks. These spaces act as an insulator surrounding the ice, helping to prevent the ice from melting in summer.

In most ice caves the ice does not change much in volume throughout the summer. Ice is known to be greatly reduced or disappear from some caves during an exceptionally long dry period, but generally returns when normal precipitation is again the standard. For example, Heppe Cave contained ice in the summer of 1956 and 1958 but not in 1957. The rainfall and snowfall of 1956 and early 1957 was considerable below normal. As the precipitation in 1958 has been well above normal, Heppe Cave should have a greater volume of ice in 1959 than there is at present.

The following caves are the best and most well-known ice caves in the monument. The direction that the entrance faces has been included to illustrate the face that the angle of the sun's rays is not an important factor in the formation of ice caves in Lava Beds.

CRYSTAL CAVE. Crystal Cave contains the most beautiful and spectacular display of ice in the monument. The entrance is a vertical descent of 20 feet. The cave is in five levels. Inside the entrance, which faces east, a solid sheet of ice covers the wall and floors. This ice is remarkably clear, as rock fragments can be seen up to depths of two or more feet. Farther westward are three tremendous ice pendants, twenty feet high and four to six feet thick. Portions of these are almost transparent. In the lowest level of Crystal Cave there is a huge mound of ice, about five feet thick and twenty feet square. A tunnel about two feet high leads completely through the ice. This tunnel apparently has been in the ice since 1936. The most beautiful ice formations in Crystal Cave are the ice crystals. Portions of the cave are completely covered with these crystals, which range in size up to one inch in

width and are found in groups which are six inches in diameter. The crystals are hexagonal in shape and sparkle with a brilliant luster in lamplight. Another form of crystal exists in the lower level and are formed into ribbons, looking very similar to transluscent gypsum flowers. Unfortunately, there are only two of these ribbons remaining, the other having been vandalized. Crystal Cave contains more ice than any other cave in the monument.

FROZEN RIVER CAVE. Frozen River Cave, which faces southwest, has a tremendous mass of ice. The ice chamber is about one hundred feet below the surface. The ice is several hundred feet in length and about five to six feet thick. It is covered by a thin pool of water.

MERRILL ICE CAVE. This cave, which was formerly Bearpaw Ice Cave, faces north. The ice in this cave is similar to a frozen river, fifteen feet wide and four hundred feet long. The middle of the ice river contains a fifteen foot deep pit, into which the ice cascades.

COXS ICE CAVE. Coxs Ice Caves faces southwest and contains a dome room about fifty feet square full of ice. As in Frozen River Cave, two inches of water covers the ice.

SKULL CAVE. The ice chamber in Skull Cave (the entrance faces west) is about one hundred and fifty feet below the surface. The ice is similar to that in Merrill Ice Cave.

WHITE LACE CAVE. The entrance to White Lace Cave faces northeast and the ice is in small thin patches scattered throughout the tube.

HEPPE CAVE. Heppe Cave, one of the very few ice caves with two entrances, faces west and east. The ice in Heppe Cave is covered by a pool of water two to three feet deep. The floor of this cave is composed of collapse from a tube and the ice is formed in a low depression in this breakdown.

## CAVE LIFE

Plant life in the lava tubes is limited to lichens growing in the sunlit areas of the caves, with the exception of Fern Cave. As its name suggests, Fern Cave contains a luxuriant growth of ferns in the entrance, flourishing in spite of the semi-desert conditions.

The vertebrate animal life of the tubes does not remain permanently underground. The most common mammal observed in the caves, of course, the bats. In Blue Grotto Cave, Long-Eared bats (Corynorhinus rafinesquii) are fairly common. The western Pipistrellus has been observed in Coxs Ice Cave, Sentinel Cave, and Juniper Cave. It is thought that perhaps a variety of Myotis also occurs in the momument caves. Bat Cave contains guano ten feet thick and was said to house over three million bats at one time (K.A. Murray and J.D. Howard personal communication).

Wood rats nests are seen in almost every cave. Bobcats have been reported in the Caldwell Caves, and a pika or cony has been seen in the entrance to Thunderbolt Cave. Purple Martins roost in the entrance to Fossil Cave. Dragonshead Cave and Skull Cave have yielded the skulls of a now extinct bighorn sheep. Antelope skulls have also been found in Skull Cave and Coyote Cave was named for the skelton of a coyote that was found in it. Gopher snakes, attracted by toads and mice in Fern Cave, startled many visitors who were conducted through this cave.

The Indians knew and probably occupied certain caves, as the pic-

tographs suggest. These are found in Big Painted Cave, Little Painted Cave, and Ship Cavern (all located in approximately the same area). Two human skeltons are said to have been found in Skull Cave, which is quite near the three above caves.

Fossil Cave, in the northeastern part of the monument, has been named for several fossils found in the lava tube. It has recently been suggested that perhaps the lava flow uncovered the fossils, rather than burying them. The first fossils were found in 1931 and included two teeth (upper and lower molar) of a camel (Camelops sp?), portions of two teeth and a part of a lower jaw of a young mastodon (Mammut americanum), and a tooth of a carnivore. These fossils are in the Museum of Paleontology at the University of California.

*This chapter condensed from the booklet "The Land of The Burnt Out Fires"*

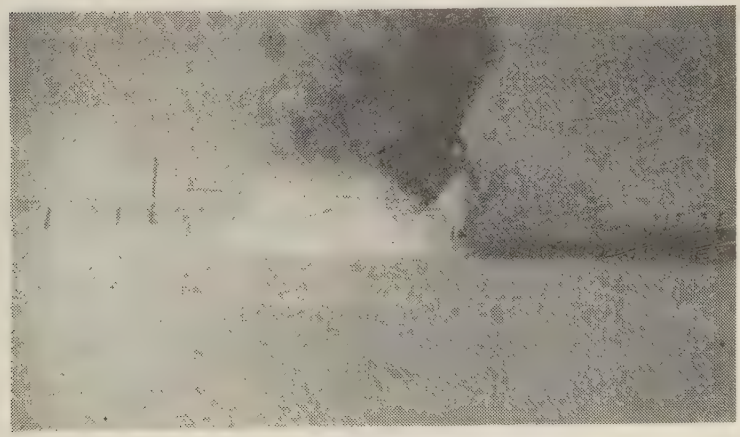
*Courtesy of the U.S. Park Service*

**Steamboat on Goose Lake in 1909**
--photo courtesy Modoc County Museum

**The first store in Cedarville as it appeared in 1900**
--photo courtesy Modoc County Museum

**Hotel Amadee at the now non-existant town of Amadee**

--photo courtesy Modoc County Museum



**The train comes into Ravendale. The year -- 1922**

--photo courtesy Modoc County Musuem

**Adin as it appeared in 1907**

--photo courtesy Modoc County Museum

**Basset Hot Springs in Big Valley**

--photo courtesy Modoc County Museum

**Looking north on Main St., Fort Bidwell, in 1913**
--photo courtesy Modoc County Museum

**Rabbit Drive near Alturas**
--photo courtesy Modoc County Museum

National Monument Marker

This cross, overlooking old Japanese camp marks graves of unknown soldiers of Modoc War

## Chapter II

# Modoc National Forest

Modoc National Forest, which stretches over parts of four counties, is one of the largest in the United States.

Founded on November 29, 1904 by proclamation of President Theodore Roosevelt it had been petitioned for by various cattle and sheepmen who were in dispute over the use of open range

The original forest was created as Warner Mountains Forest Reserve and contained 306,518 acres. On February, now known as the Modoc Forest Reserve, it acquired an additional 288,218 acres. On October 1, 1920 President Wilson added another 326,225 acres including the lava beds and Indian battle sites.

The forest was at that time known as the Modoc National Forest. Later the lava beds and battle sites were made into a national monument, this in 1925, and in 1934 they were turned over to the newly organized National Park Service.

The first supervisor was A.H. Hogue who came to Alturas in March of 1905. He stayed for two years before being transferred and Chris Rachford took over and held the office until 1914. In those days rangers got $60 per month and supplied and took care of their own horses. Later the base pay was raised to $75 per month.

One of the famous characters of the Forest Service in those early days was Eli Dale who began work with them as a laborer in 1908. A native Missourian, where he was born in 1852, he had worked as a teamster, miner and cowpuncher before joining the service. In 1912, when he was 60 years of age, he was assigned to Happy Camp Lookout where he stayed until 1927. He died in 1928 at the ripe old age of 76. Many stories revolve around this "last of the old westerners" but one of the favorite concerns his oft repeated statement to visitors to the lookout - "What in Hell did Uncle Sam send me up here for?"

When the Forest Service first took over this vast acreage they had

much more to contend with than the usual argurents between sheepmen and cattle drovers -- although these debates waxed pretty hot at times. For one thing the country was overrun by wild horses. During the years 1908-1909 they rounded up over 600 head of broomtails.

There was also the matter of poaching. Some of the local families thought nothing of shooting deer whenever they took the notion and selling the meat to restaurants. In one year one boy is reported to have killed 1200 deer - bucks, does and fawns.

At first the Forest Service could make little inroads on these trespassers. They were short on manpower and transportation was not what it could have been. It took a ranger all day to get from Hat Creek to Alturas - a trip now made by car in fifteen minutes.

Happy Camp Lookout, where Eli held forth, and from where he could look out over six counties in two states, didn't even have a house built there until 1915.

Fire was the biggest problem. In 1911 to 1915 there were seventeen man caused fires. Usually these were started by cattlemen who wanted to burn off the dry grass and brush so they would have fresh feed in the spring. If they also burned trees as well, they couldn't care less. Added to these were 28 blazes started by lightening.

How the big land owners felt about this is expressed when in 1910 some fires went out of control on land owned by the Red River Lumber Company. The Forest Service short on manpower and lacking funds to fight fire on private land, wired the company headquarters in Minneapolis for assistance. The reply was to let it burn, there were plenty of trees out west.

That same year the Widow Valley fire destroyed 93,000 acres of pine and left scars seen to this day.

Later the lumber companies changed their way of thinking and began providing manpower to aid the rangers when a blaze seemed to be getting too big.

In 1920 seven fires, started on land owned by the railroad, joined and almost wiped out the mill town of Whitehorse. It took four days to get this blaze under control.

1924 was the worst year to date when 108 fires were reported in the forest, of which 66 were attributed to lightening and the others to various causes.

One of the worst of these fires was the Sugar Hill blaze which crowned and destroyed 6,500 acres of timber before 600 fighters got it under control.

At Lassen Creek Canyon a fire jumped a canyon without igniting haystacks and buildings in the ravine, demonstrating the freakish nature of blazes.

But at Crane Creek people weren't so lucky. The saw mill was destroyed and 200 women and children were led out over a single dirt road. Those cars which couldn't make it were pushed off the road into the canyon and their occupants loaded on other vehicles. They got out in just the nick of time. The cause of this fire was traced to the Southern Pacific and the railroad paid a hefty sum for damages to all concerned.

While most fires were caused by lightening storms or by carelessness in the woods there have been some unique causes in the annuls of the Forest Service. A steam operated tractor started a fire in 1941 which burned on and off Forest Service land and destroyed 86,700

acres. A Basque, chasing sheep, stumbled and matches in his pocket ignited and started one blaze; another was started by boys burning out a wood ants' nest; still another by children accidentally reflecting the lens of a telescope, this latter was the Timber Mountain fire of 1925. And one of the more unusual causes was an iron wagon wheel hitting a rock and sending sparks into the dry grass.

As stated before the rangers received little help and a great deal of antagonism from local residents. The sheepmen and cattle men were more than willing to have the government arbitrate their boundary disputes but they couldn't see much sense in getting hot, tired and dirty fighting fire when their general attitude was that they didn't care if it burned or not. A similiar feeling was displayed by the lumber companies, the larger ones which had their headquarters back east and looked upon the west as a boundless harvest of trees and more trees. They were also irritated by the Forest Service rule that they clean up the mess of broken limbs and shattered logs they left behind when they logged through an area. In those days this was called the "slash."

In later years when the importance of conservation became apparent to the lumbermen the Forest Service was able to get help from the camps when a fire became threatening. It was also the law in those days that rangers could stop cars on the highway and order men to help fight fire.

In the 1930's when the Civilian Conservation Corps came into being the Service received a great deal of assistance not only in fighting fire, but in clearing fire brakes, chopping out brush and building roads into what had been inaccessible areas.

Today fire fighting has become a more scientific business. Trained crews of firemen are ready to rush to large blazes, sometimes traveling hundreds of miles to reach them. An expansive network of lookouts keep an eye on virtually all of the forest land and at the first sign of smoke a crew of highly specialized "smoke jumpers" parachutes into the site and more often than not has the blaze under control before it can spread. And then there are the borate planes which make repeated trips over the fire and dump suppressive chemicals on it.

In the years since its inception the Forest Service has also taken on many other duties. They control grazing areas, mark trees to be cut by logging companies, maintain roads, build picnic and camping areas for the general public, survey and make maps of hitherto unknown regions, keep track of the wildlife, rescue lost hunters and hikers and in general provide a vast number of services never dreamed of during the early days of the Modoc National Forest.

**Knight's store at Adin - Year unknown**

-Photo courtesy of Chace's Store. Adin

**Old view of Adin**

-Photo courtesy of Chace's Store

**The Fort Bidwell store many years ago.**

--photo courtesy Heard's Market, Litchfield

## Chapter 12

# Towns and Villages

There has always been a little dispute over who the first permanent resident of Modoc County was. Ely Rice claims that he was the first, settling near Eagleville. But then James Townsend always said he was there first when he built a cabin at Soldier Creek in Surprise Valley. Neither man could give an exact date but it is believed that both arrived there sometime in 1853.

Although for years wagon trains had traversed the county en route to Oregon or California none tarried. It was too isolated, they had definite destinations -- or the presence of the Modocs made habitation unwise. In fact, the fame of these Indians as warriors was such that few people even considered moving into their homeland.

In 1863 a party of Government surveyors under the direction of Vaughn Smith trekked across the desert in an effort to define the line between California and Nevada. They suddenly came upon a green valley and named it "Surprise Valley".

During 1864 some cattlemen began to graze their herds on the eastern slopes of the Sierras and gradually some more venturesome settlers began to move into the area. A Mr. and Mrs. Bare came into the valley in '64 and built a cabin on the creek which bears their name. This cabin was sometimes used as a stopping off place for travelers.

On March 18, 1864 Peter Peterson rode in and discovered some caves on the eastern slope of the Warner range. He lived in one for a while, made the acquaintance of the Bare family and later brought back his brother-in-law, Martin Ruble, from Indian Valley. They built cabins and in September of that year their families joined them.

In 1865 John R. and John Baty, Sr. came along with a yoke of oxen. They stayed to dig an irrigation ditch from Willow Creek. Some other early settlers were Mrs. Sarah Wood, for whom Lake Sarah was named; George Wimer, Marshall Monroe and Levy Ross. Monroe played host at the first Fourth of July celebration held in the county.

The settlers in those days were

scattered hither, thither and yon throughout the valley and relied a great deal on one another for protection against the Indians. There was no military post there in those days and the nearest soldiers were at Smoke Creek Fort on the Pit River. However, the Indians in Surprise Valley were Piutes and while they could be bothersome they did not represent the threat that the Modocs did in the Tule Lake area.

Supplies came from Marysville by way of Susanville. This was also the closest post office and mail used to collect there until the post master could find someone who would ride up the valley and deliver it. He didn't get many takers. George Thayer, who was the first carrier, left one day on his route with a premonition. He was murdered and scalped en route on the Madeline Plains.

In 1865 soldiers were finally stationed at Fort Bidwell and after that the military brought in the mail.

On January 8, 1866 an Indian attack was launched against the McConnaughy cabin. Robert McConnaughy was wounded in the arm and the cabin sacked when he and some friends fled for help. This coupled with some other nuisance attacks around Lake City brought the settlers to Fort Bidwell asking for assistance. The Lieutenant in charge refused as he was afraid of a threatening blizzard. The ranchers then organized under the command of Joe Marks and rode after the Indians to recover their stolen stock. There was a slight skirmish and John Stephens of Cedarville was wounded. This time the military answered the plea and sent troops with the homesteaders. The latter were warned not to fight anyone but the men of the tribe. The soldiers knew that the main reason the Indians were stealing stock was because they were hungry. But the settlers could not be restrained and in an action at Guano Valley they made the atrocities of Vietnam seem like loveins. They shot down and slaughtered an entire band of Northern Piutes; men, women, children and babes in arms. One lad, Lee Winnemucca, escaped by slipping up a creek. He caught a horse and rode it over 200 miles in the coldest part of winter to Fort McDermitt in Nevada. Although sentiment was for the Indians no action was ever taken against the settlers. It was lucky for them that they didn't massacre a band of Modoc or it might have been a different story.

Life in the valley was the crudest type of frontier life. Cabins were raised by house raising parties. The windows were open in summer and closed by animal skins in winter. There was no glass available. Doors hung on leather straps and the house was heated and food cooked by fireplaces. There were no stoves -- even furniture was handmade. It is hard to understand the isolation of this area -- even as late as the 1870's when civilization had kissed most of the rest of the state.

## LAKE CITY

The first organized community in the county was Lake City which was founded in 1864. The township was surveyed and recorded by W.B. Sweringen and the building started by P.W. Hayes. Brown's Hotel was the first two story building in the county. Lake City had a lot of firsts. The first sawmill was near here,on Mill Creek, erected by P. Hickerson. Here also was the first grist mill and when Mormon crickets threatened to overrun the region and pollute the water in the creeks the towns-

people dug the first well at Lake City.

The "Logs and Poles" school, first in the county was built here and was privately conducted until 1867 when a school district was formed. In 1868 Hay's store opened and sold flour for $50 a sack and bacon for $1.00 a pound. W.A. Salisbury was the Justice of the Peace here and performed the first wedding in the county at Lake City.

The community might well have been the first county seat, as a matter of fact Siskiyou county had their county offices here, but although they polled the highest number of votes in the election they waived the honor in favor of Alturas.

CEDARVILLE

Cedarville was originally a camping place for wagon trains and later there was a trading post here. It was originally called Deep Creek but the name was changed by William Cressler and John Bonner, in 1867, in honor of Bonner's hometown in Iowa. Even so the two gentlemen, who had a store here, continued to carry the address "Deep Creek, Surprise Valley, California" until 1874 when the county was formed and the name officially changed.

These two gentlemen did much to promote their town, building a road over the Warner Mountains, planting the first trees, and running a bank of sorts in their store.

During the 1870's it seemed as though the tiny hamlet might become the leading settlement in the county. Four hotels waited to serve travelers and other businesses flourished. But it was in too isolated a position, the new road from Susanville and Reno to Alturas by-passed Cedarville and stagnation set in. The residents must have realized this for in the election for county seat Cedarville only received two votes.

Today it is just a small cattle town on a road which leads to Eagleville and Nevada.

EAGLEVILLE

It derived its name from eagle nests seen in the cottonwood trees by early travelers. Even more isolated than Cedarville it never did amount to much of a town. They didn't even get electricity until 1938. On the road from Cedarville to the Nevada deserts it is now attracting tourists who come to see the old buildings there.

FORT BIDWELL

This is the best known of the settlements east of the Warner Range. It was founded as a military post in August 1865 and named in honor of General John Bidwell, a pioneer Californian. Quarters for two companies and four cabins for officers were erected by Colonel Williamson, the fort's first commanding officer. There was also a quartermaster and commissary storehouse, hospital, mess hall, office and guard house as well as corral for the cavalry mounts. Supplies were wagoned in from San Francisco, 535 miles distant. The Indians in this immediate area were Piutes, Klamaths and Snakes.

Two sawmills were opened soon thereafter, one by H.O. Jopp and the other by Henry Stephens. In 1866 Irwin Ayers opened the first store and a number of cabins were built by settlers near the fort.

The first troops stationed here were volunteers but in 1867, after the Civil War had ended, these were replaced by regulars. During 1870 the post was changed from a cavalry to an infantry post and Captain McGregor was placed in command. He was the officer in charge when the Modoc War broke out.

As the post grew so did the

town. Two hotels opened as well as numerous other businesses.

The year 1870 saw another event of importance. An army scout named Hoag, while poking around the Warner Mountains, discovered gold. Shortly thereafter he was killed in an Indian skirmish without telling where the strike had been made. Some looked but it wasn't until 1905 that a sheepherder again found the yellow metal. This time a number of miners flocked in and a town named Hoag, later changed to High Grade, sprang up. But it wasn't until 1909-10 that the big rush came. It didn't last long -- there wasn't that much gold.

The Modoc War was over in 1879 when the Piutes began to act up. The soldiers from Fort Bidwell rode out and returned with 120 warriors who were held prisoner for six months before being turned loose. During this period their women and children had been forced to shift for themselves.

After this episode the Piutes quieted down and in 1890 Redfield Proctor, the Secretary of War, recommended that the post be turned over to the Department of Interior as part of the Indian Reservation. In 1892 the flag was hauled down for the last time as an army post and, except for 15 soldiers who remained, it was abandoned. In 1898 the property was formally turned over to the Department of Interior for use as an Indian school. The barracks were used as classrooms and the first enrollment was twenty pupils. In 1929 a new school building was erected but in 1930 a bill was passed in Congress leaving the education of the Indians to the separate states. The school was turned over to California and for a short while a tuberculosis sanitarium was operated here for Indians. This was closed in 1939.

FAIRPORT

This town came into existance with the railroad and the town boomed to a population of about 100 when the gold rush was on. It was also popular as a resort but when the lake dried up and the railroad ceased to haul passengers Fairport ceased to exist

PINE CREEK

This town, on the Oregon border, was founded by Enoch Loper and Joseph Robinett. Both of them sold land to settlers in the 70's and this resulted in a mix-up on the deeds when some parties would come up with the same parcel.

The town also enjoyed a gold rush boom but when gold died and a disasterous fire hit the downtown district in 1911 it began to fade away. However when California legalized liquor and Oregon stayed dry a new boom broke out as thirsty Oregonions poured across the border to tilt a glass or two or stock their own cellars. The Big Four Mine was near here, so named when George Plummer, Bert Wade and Alf Reed found a rich vein and staked out four claims.

WHITE HORSE

This town was founded by a few settlers in 1870, later became a lumber camp for the McCloud River Lumber Company, and then passed out of existance. There is some debate about how it was named. One faction said that the first settlers found a dead white horse here, others say the Indians named it, a third group claims that a man here raised white horses to pull brewery wagons, and the final theory is that early surveyors found wild white horses here. Take your choice.

WILLOW RANCH

Named after the ranch which

covered 2200 acres nearby. At one time it was a fair to middlin' settlement with stores, post office and so forth. Nothing there now.

DAVIS CREEK

It was named after an early settler who was killed by Indians in 1868. The town was founded by Ramer and McKinley who came there to build a mercantile store. It once showed promise of growing but then faded away and now doesn't even show on most maps.

ADIN

This prosperous little community is in the southwest corner of Modoc County and although it was on a well traveled route it wasn't until April of 1869 that a settlement was started here.

The first settlers were two Kentucky boys named Adin McDowell and Samuel Nebeker. It is said that McDowell took all the land north of the river and Nebeker the land south. They took a bead on the North Star and laid out Main Street. Then Nebeker said that McDowell's first name was the only name short and distinctive enough to be used as the town's title and so "Adin" was born.

A Mr. Harvey founded the first store called Knight's and it was said to be the best mercantile store in the area. McDowell and a man named Mitchell built a grist mill here and almost lost their investment when the first load of grain was stolen and they had to pay for it out of their depleted pockets.

But the mill prospered and for a while products of the Adin Flour Mill were popular throughout the west. It was closed in 1922. Another promising business which started here and is still going full blast is the Edgertown Lumber Co, a successor to a number of smaller mills that started at one time or another. In the old days lumber was shipped by freight team and ox carts and often took several days to go forty miles. Later two cylinder trucks were used and made the astonishing speed of three miles an hour.

The town had a bad reputation amongst the lightfingered gentry and until 1900 a thief was as likely to get hung as tried in court for his crime.

Several disasterous fires swept the town, notably in 1904, 1915 and 1931. All were fought by bucket brigades but after the last one, in 1939, a volunteer fire department was organized and a fire engine purchased.

LIKELY

In 1878 this town had a problem. The name they had chosen, "South Fork" had been rejected by the Post Office, They tried three more times and each time it was vetoed by Washington. Finally one member of the committee remarked "that it wasn't likely they'd ever get a name." Someone else then suggested they call it "Likely." The name was submitted and accepted and "Likely" it had been ever since.

The Infernal Caverns battleground is located near here.

The town is one of the oldest in the county and numbered amongst its prominent citizens John Flournoy W.D. Trumbo, Wm. Nelson, Charley Williams, Thomas Holden, The Cox Brothers, Tom and Bill, Joe Stone, the Booth Brothers, Sol Hufford and Frank Cooley.

The soil is very rich and peaty here and at one time a settler, not knowing the inflammable nature of peat, set a fire which burned for months. Around 1900 the citizens of the area, at their own expense, drained the swamp and gave the railroad a right of way. Two canals

were also built for irrigation and this now represents one of the most prosperous areas in Modoc County.

BAYLEY

A railroad stop which may have been named after A.J. Bayley, a pioneer Californian who built wagon roads and hotels throughout the state.

JESS VALLEY

This area lies about fourteen miles east of Likely and while well settled it never became a town. A man named Brooks built a mill here to cut timber and according to Forest Service maps this mill is still standing although rather inaccessible.

CANBY

Named after General Canby. (See Modoc Indian War) Five miles south and east of here S.D. Evans Sr., and Joe Bailey were killed in a fight with Indians. This occurred when the two men, and others, were driving a herd of 900 cattle from Oregon to the mines at Virginia City, Nevada. Kelly Hot Springs, once a favorite resort, was located near here.

DAY

Named for Nathaniel H. Day in 1879.

GARRETT

Another railroad station located on the Southern Pacific and probably named after some company official many years ago.

HACKAMORE

This station was established on the Nevada-California-Oregon Railroad in 1910. It is a western American word which is a corruption of the Spanish "Jaquina" meaning headstall of a bridle. In 1928 the Southern Pacific changed the name to the popular, western spelling.

INDIAN CAMP

Once again named by the railroad it probably took its name from traces of a Modoc encampment nearby.

LOOKOUT

Founded in 1860 it took its name from a nearby hill where it is said the Pit River Indians kept a lookout to warn against raids by the Modocs. Town was once the scene of the Lookout Lynchings.

PEREZ

Founded by the railroad there is no record of for whom the station was named.

TIONESTA

This was once a lumber camp and was named in 1931 by J.R. Shaw, of the Shaw Lumber Company, after Tionesta Forest in Pennsylvania.

**A day's take at Tulelake**

-Photo courtesy Shell Bloch

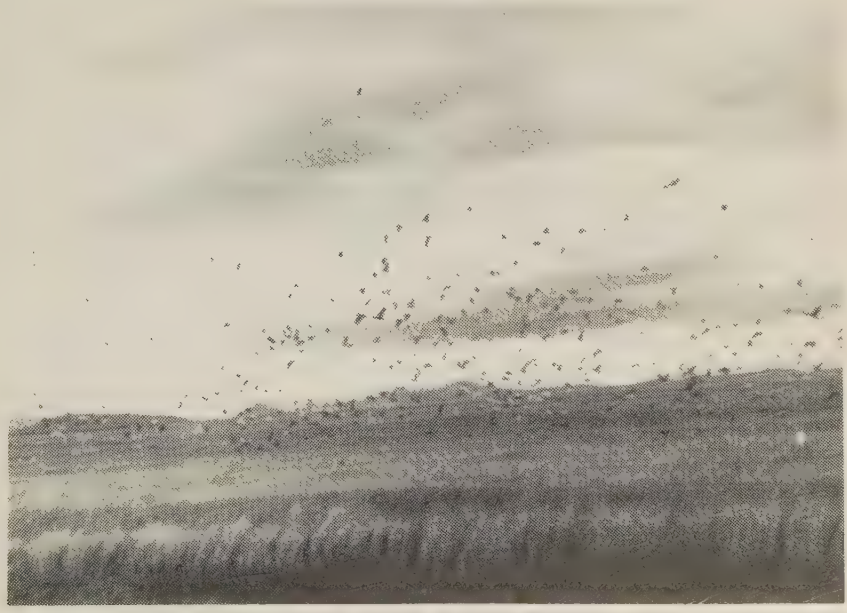
**Returning from a day's shoot**

-Photo courtesy Pete John

**Grain elevators of Newell Grain Growers Ass'n**

**Flocks of geese over Tulelake**

-Photos courtesy Pete John



**Northern Modoc County is Waterfowl paradise**

Potato Picking at Tulelake

**Davis Creek Store in 1944**

-Photo courtesy of Modoc Co. Museum

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